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Correspondence

Prism shattering

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Himes and Himes ["Rights, Economics, & the Trinity," March 14] are on the verge of articulating an authentic liberation theology in the American context. The basis for it is the profound Christian insight that "there is no being apart from relatedness." In its dazzling brightness, that insight shatters the prism of American individualism, which presently distorts American social, economic, and political life, and allows liberation to burst forth in covenantal concern for all God's children.

In a sense, the article is also a propadeutic to the American Catholic bishops' pastoral on the economy. As well intentioned and decently wrought as that document is, it founders in its own articulation of the essence of human nature as person-in-community, because it lacks grounding in the multi-faceted symbol of the Trinity, which Christianity declares is the shape of the "Really Real" which informs our experience of reality. This, of course, is not to disparage that document, nor the efforts of its authors, but only to suggest that the final word has not been said, while hoping that succeeding efforts bear the echo of the trinitarian formulation sounded by Himes and Himes.

The authors of the article ought, as they develop their trinitarian political theology, to be more forceful about the public meaning of all their key terms. Community, for example, in its private sense, is the realm of the intimate interpersonal relationships of a small group of like-minded persons. In its public sense, however, it is the effort that gathers strangers together to the common human task that the authors recognize. Community in the public sense represents the bonds of the "we" in "We, the People of the United States"; the amicable "we" of social relationships from the family to Esalen to the weekend bowling league, represents community's private sense. It is the expectations of the warmth of the private that have frustrated well-intentioned forays into the public, and which allow individualism to have its easy sway. RONALD D. PASQUARIELLO

Center for Theology & Public Policy

A welcome addition

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: The Himes' essay, "Rights, Economics, & the Trinity," [March 14] makes a major contribution to the theological grounding of the claim for economic rights. Its development of the communitarian base for a political theology poses a striking counter to the liberal tradition and the spirit of individualism so dominant in the U.S. culture. Himes' formula, God is community, opens new insights and adds a strong support theme for the bishops' pastoral on the economy.

REV. AL LoPINTO

Campaign for Human Development

Established confusion

Gambier, Ohio

To the Editors: I found the contrast between liberalism and communitarianism in the article by the Revs. Michael and Kenneth Himes ["Rights, Economics, & the Trinity," March 14], extremely confusing.

The adjective "liberal" originally meant, and still means to us who accept this designation with pride, bountiful, generous, open-minded, and tending to intellectual enlargement. Political associations arose in the nineteenth century with analogous implications of openness to new forms of government of a democratic kind.

In this sense Fathers Himes and Himes are correct in saying that "the liberal tradition starts with the individual"; but in no sense does it involve a denial of community. Indeed their own thesis seems to be that the Christian should be concerned with the economic freedom of every individual in order to make possible participation in community. Surely it is the neoconservatives who are indifferent to the rights of the individual as defined in the article.

Hobbes can be read as valuing the individual. But, given his political program which would "save" the individual by destroying his freedom, to call him a liberal makes sense only from the neoconservative perspective, according to which all who question established hierarchical structures are to be lumped indiscriminately together and equally repudiated. Is that the intention of the authors?

And what of Thomas Paine, whom the authors quote with approval as a defender of the idea of welfare rights? Was he not, by any definition, a liberal?

RICHARD HETTLINGER

Kenyon College

The transforming mode

Notre Dame, Ind.

To the Editors: I am always illuminated by Ernest Ranly's contributions to our theological understanding of ourselves in the light of the situation in Latin America. What I found particularly illuminating about his recent "Under the Peruvian Volcano" [February 14] was the perspective he has come to, precisely as a result of his pastoral work, regarding the Maoist strategies of the *Sendero Luminoso* group in Peru. What makes his piece so useful is that it is *not* one more tract on "liberation theology," but rather a reflection out of one's lived experience regarding social upheaval and the inner necessities imposed upon each of us in order to have a viable process of change. What radical groups always remind us is that change, to be effective, must entail transformation. What they so often

(Continued on page 255)

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NECESSARY, ORTHODOX, & RESPONSIBLE

WHEN ASKED RECENTLY to describe the present human rights situation in Guatemala, Archbishop Prospero Penados del Barrio replied: "It is very bad. . . . There is no respect for the individual and no regard for human dignity. Disappearances continue. People are still persecuted for their ideas. If someone disappears or is kidnapped, there is nowhere to seek redress. No one in authority accepts responsibility."

Last month in Rome, Pope John Paul II told the Brazilian bishops that liberation theology is "the red-hot question." It ought to be. Not simply because it has raised a variety of questions in theological and political circles, but because it continues to wrestle with those brutal realities which choke a majority of this planet's people. As if echoing Peru's Gustavo Gutiérrez that "criticism will deepen and clarify liberation theology," the pope told the bishops it is the church's duty to update and deepen this theology which, "when purified of elements which can adulterate it, is not only orthodox, but also necessary."

All this was said as a prelude to the publication at Eastertide of the long-awaited "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation." Issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) some eighteen months after the congregation's widely discussed and negative "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,' " the new document demonstrates a more developed and positive appreciation of liberation theology. In so doing, it transforms CDF's stick into a more compelling carrot.

A good theology welcomes the insights of other theologies. That axiom applies not only to the theology of the third world, but to that of Rome as well. And with "Freedom and Liberation," Rome no longer denies liberation theology its necessary place in the church's search for truth. With "Freedom and Liberation," liberation theology has gained a new legitimacy. It must be developed. It must be purified. But never again can it be dismissed simply as a "theology of the fringe."

This acceptability implies and expects accountability. That was the message to be gained from the initial instruction eighteen months ago. But that message can only be comprehended correctly when read in light of the more recent instruction. To read it the other way round would be foolhardy. One is even tempted to question the order of publication of the two very different instructions. But then one realizes the Holy Spirit might well have been at work.

This is not to say the new document comes on unbroken tablets. In fact, its 18,000 words consistently suffer the limitations of the ecclesial genre. The document is simply too long. Its language is sexist. It refers to the Jews as a people of the past. It relies on previous papal documents to validate its own conclusions. It is seldom concrete, let alone does it hazard a parable. Repeatedly it suggests a dichotomy between creation and the things of the spirit. It feels compelled to recount not only

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the whole of salvation history, but to mention every evil in the modern lexicon. Is there perhaps an insecurity in saying everything without taking a breath? Finally, when all has been said, very little that is new has been brought forth from the storehouse.

Still, "Freedom and Liberation" marks an important achievement. It accepts liberation theology as necessary: necessary because it responds to the real life and needs of people; necessary because it redirects the church's preoccupation away from self; necessary because it discloses anew the saving care of God for every aspect of human life.

This positive reckoning must not be gone back on. In the earlier "Aspects," Christian base communities, those indigenous groups which have sent a new, if sometimes unsettling, current of life into the church in the third world, were criticized for lacking discernment and "necessary catechetical and theological preparation." But in "Freedom and Liberation," it is noted these base communities "are a source of great hope for the church." In fact, it is the poor who "understand best and as it were instinctively . . . the liberation accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ." This is why Bishop François Gayot of Cape Haitien, Haiti, could say recently that when the church "has confined its role to announcing the Gospel without grasping the [everyday] reality, it affects no one." Such groups as the base communities must remain in unity with the local and the universal church. In so doing they are genuine expressions of communion and instruction. But it would have been better had the instruction urged unity not only on these communities, but on the part of the universal church as well.

The document notes that "a theological reflection developed from a particular experience can constitute a very positive contribution to the church universal," and, as if responding to voices of concern raised following last year's special synod, devotes a brief but explicit section to the church as "the people of God." It reaffirms in strong terms the priniciple of subsidiarity, and notes that while there is a variety of charisms in the church, all are accounted charisms of service.

"Freedom and Liberation" makes important and useful clarifications on class war and on liberation theology's special option for the poor. It says the latter, "manifests the universality of the church's being and mission" but warns that option can never be reduced to an ideological category which excludes anyone or any class, either from salvation or their God-given rights. It condemns passivity in the face of poverty and injustice, and links unmistakably the salvific and ethical dimensions of the Gospel. It reaffirms that most radical command: to love our neighbor, even our enemies and persecutors.

What then can we expect as a result of this more positive document on liberation theology? Bonhoeffer wrote from prison, shortly before his death, that "we have learnt, rather too late, that action comes not through thought, but from a readiness for responsibility." To place confidence in a document rather than shoulder our responsibility would be the cruelest outcome. What is needed is a deeply prayerful continuation of the process of responsibility that has already begun. Note South Africa, Haiti, Chile, the Philippines, South Korea. In all, the church has aligned itself with movements for social change. These actions have not and will not be welcome. And the reaction to liberation theologians will continue to be mixed — in Pretoria and Santiago as well as in Rome.

Yet for all that, the church today is being led — not where it may have wanted — but where it must go. And while liberation theologians will yet be tested, and rightly so, the setting which inspires their reflections is not likely to dissolve soon. In the last analysis, it is the poor, not mere documents, who will continue to push the church forward. It is their wisdom and experience that must provide the final, responsible word.

QADDAFI & QUESTIONS

This issue of *Commonweal* goes to press less than twenty-four hours after the U.S. bombing of Libya. The papers are full of stories but contain little information, in fact, beyond what the president, the secretary of state, and the secretary of defense told the nation last night. This morning's *New York Times* has editorialized that "on the basis of early information even the most scrupulous citizen can only approve and applaud the American attacks on Libya." Frankly, the lesson of history is that the most scrupulous citizen does well not to approve and applaud — nor to condemn and denounce — such a military attack "on the basis of early information." In past such crises, early information has proved to be, well, not exactly false but not the whole truth either. Only a short while ago, Mr. Reagan went on national television with a talk riddled with what Mark Twain called "stretchers" about the Sandinista government in Managua. The *Times* editorial, in the Libyan case, speaks of "the evidence, now laid out clearly, to the public" — specifically, concerning the April 5 terrorist bombing of a West Berlin disco. That evidence may eventually be "laid out clearly," but, for the moment, it has not been. Presumably our European allies were privy to the details — and their reaction was mixed. It would be nice to have full confidence in both the accuracy of the administration's declarations and in the prudence with which it has evaluated matters that are more or less inevitably closed to the public. We do not have such confidence.

At the same time, it must be underlined once again that terrorism has truly become an international plague. A wide consensus now exists in the West linking Libya — but not Libya alone — to such terrorism. The best construction on the American action, then, is that it has begun an anti-terrorism crusade with real teeth which, although initiated unilaterally like the British anti-slave trade crusade of the last century, might eventually gain such acceptance as simply to render terrorism something intolerable for states to be involved in.

Such a development does not, unfortunately, appear to us as likely. Terrorism today is protean. It exists on multiple levels, from independent revolutionary and religious sects to intricate state involvement; it is not a totally clear-cut phenomenon but fades by degrees into forms of guerrilla warfare where targets are no longer bystanders or even enemy civilians but officials

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and military personnel. In some cases, it is motivated by suicidal fanaticism, in other cases by more or less "rational" grievances of the sort that have traditionally grounded warfare.

To eradicate this disease — or even severely limit it — through the "silver bullet" of military actions is a program that, on the face of it at least, confronts grave obstacles: from the *real-politik* considerations that have kept us from acting against a Soviet-backed Syria to the reverse-psychology effects that make a hero rather than an outcast of Qaddafi defying the colossus. Such a program also has its own serious burden of costs: material, political, and moral.

All of this leaves us not with what the *Times* calls "the sober satisfaction of seeing justice done," but with a gnawing sense of unanswered questions. Can such military actions actually cripple terrorist operations, i.e., by destroying weapons, training areas, and so on? (Secretary Shultz fudged on this question at the April 14 press conference.) Can we realistically expect that governments subject to such attacks will be weakened rather than strengthened internally? Will such a program of military reponses to terrorism have to be consistently and constantly pursued, with the result that it dominates U.S. foreign policy and further erodes the remaining restraints against unilateral, military actions in the international system? How does such a program relate to any overall U.S. policy toward the Middle East and its several festering conflicts? How do we decide that such a policy is not working — and step away from it? What will be the impact of such a program on our domestic political life?

"We Americans are slow to anger," said the president. We wish that were true. We wish, in fact, that he had said, "We Americans are historically vulnerable to self-righteousness. It will be important for us to calm, not indulge, that impulse as we go about dealing with this terrible and deep-seated problem of terrorism." That would have reassured us even as we search for answers to our questions.

LABOR PAINS

Imagine that a group of religious leaders became concerned about the widening gap between the economy's need for skilled labor and the preparedness of tomorrow's labor pool. Suppose these leaders warned that unless action is taken quickly to remedy the situation, current trends suggest a dismal forecast for the year 2000. These religious leaders might underline facts like:

- The number of high school dropouts and illiterate adults will increase while entry-level jobs will require skills in addition to those possessed by the average high school graduate.
- The number of female-headed households and two-working-parent families will increase — augmenting the already pressing need for child care programs and flexible work schedules — while the federal government continues to cut spending and shift the burden for job creation, training, and placement to business, states, and municipalities.
- Youth unemployment will grow, despite the decline in the number of teenagers. At the other end of the spectrum, the workforce is aging; older, highly skilled employees will either seek retirement (leaving business without equally skilled replacements) or lateral moves which necessitate in-house retraining.
- Meanwhile, a surge in the number of illegal immigrants is expected to toughen competition for entry-level jobs in particular.

It is not hard to imagine that the authors of such a report would call for "a new comprehensive strategy" to close the preparedness gap, a strategy based on the premise that "a skilled labor force is a basic requirement for economic growth and productivity" and is therefore a special concern of both business and government.

What might be the specific components of such a strategy aimed at countering these alarming ills?

Private employers must train their own workers; schools must teach basic literacy, communications, and problem-solving skills to prepare students for jobs; duplication must be eliminated from public and private training institutions, and the overall efforts coordinated; the public must view training as an ongoing, lifetime process; job information, counseling, and testing is more vital than ever; dislocated and displaced workers will need special (possibly federally subsidized) assistance; welfare recipients must be trained for real jobs at standard wages; child care for employees is a national concern that must be met; transit systems must be ready to accommodate changing job centers; public/private partnerships are needed for adequate job creation.

Sound familiar? Perhaps you have guessed by now that we are not speaking of an imaginary report but of a real one. And it wouldn't be unreasonable if you suspected that the authors of this report were the U.S. Catholic bishops, or that it constitutes part of the final draft of the pastoral letter on the U.S. economy. The bishops, after all, have called for a national commitment to full employment; governmental support for job creation targeted on the structurally unemployed; expanded job training programs by both government and private sectors; and the formation of local, state, and national coalitions for job creation strategies and expanded job placement services.

But guess again. The report we have before us was not issued by religious leaders at all. Titled "Employment Policies: Looking to the Year 2000," it is the work of the National Alliance of Business, an independent, business-led, non-profit corporation. It appears that whether one begins from the point of human dignity and the value of work to enhance that dignity, as the bishops do, or from the point of national productivity and growth, similar conclusions about policy can be reached to resolve the problems of tomorrow's labor market.

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Of several minds: *John Garvey*

ATTENTION & AMBIGUITY

WHY DO OTHERS DISAGREE?

THE QUARRELS between religious liberals and conservatives are everywhere, and satisfy something strange in us. People on the left tend to regard those on the right with disdain, or at the very least they regard their ideas scornfully and in a reductionist way, and those on the right do the same thing to people on the left. I have enough elements of each side in me, and enough irritation with some aspects of those elements, to sympathize with a lot of what both sides want to get across to a larger public, and to distrust the whole enterprise of persuasion.

There is something scandalous about the intensity and sincerity of both the conservative and liberal visions. It is scandalous because in a fundamental way it discredits the Christian message toward which both sides claim to point. The quarrel is a distraction which impedes the mission Christ gave us: we are supposed to get the message out to others. At another level — one we should be more concerned about — it distracts those of us who think of ourselves as convinced Christians from an understanding of our own darkness and limitations.

I am tempted to locate this battle close to home: Orthodox Christians sometimes accuse one another of rationalism on the one hand or unthinking traditionalism on the other, and American Catholics have a quarrel going on between pro-choice and pro-life Catholics, and a much more important dispute between the Vatican and Charles Curran. Because of my background and my friends, these battles seem more important to me than the quarrels between liberal Protestants and their more evangelical fellows, or the disagreements between those evangelicals who are fundamentalist and those who are not. This is my own limitation, though: something very important is being neglected in all of these fights.

Part of what is being neglected is the fact that both sides in virtually any debate between reasonable people have points worth noting. It is fairly common to assume the stupidity of an opponent; the thought that someone reasonable could disagree with us is a challenge to our certainty and raises the disturbing possibility that we might not have a franchise on the truth. The opponent is the one who believes what he does because of motives which are base or unenlightened or shallow and trendy.

We, however, believe what we do because we are clear-sighted and read the facts right. We find it very difficult to admit that much of what we think of as true and certain comes to us through a complex inheritance which has only partially to do with rationality. It involves what we have accepted, or reacted against, from our personal history, our childhood and young adulthood. It involves the place in which we find ourselves within a culture full of truths we think of as self-evident. For example, the belief that the pursuit of personal happiness is all-important, and that happiness is the result of the satisfaction of desire is, in fact, a cultural artifact as limited as any similar array of beliefs from any tribe in any period of human history.

Even this belief, the one I have just advanced, is an example of a relativism which is fairly common in modern Western circles. Let me add another to it: if there is any truth at all to this, it should make us very tentative about the absolute truth of our own position, and it should make us eager to find a vision which is broader and less confined to the feeding of ego . . . because it is less a concern for truth than the protection of our sense of the self that leads us to certainty. The good scientist, to make a limited but maybe helpful comparison, is not as interested in holding on to a model of the truth as he or she is in allowing that model, in particular, to lead to a deeper and more accurate picture. The truth is finally something we experience, not an idea or abstraction, and the Christian parallel to the scientist is the person whose life is turned in the direction of God in prayer, not through the exploration of ideas about God — which are a little like ideas about planets circling other stars, since we can have no idea of God which is not false or fanciful.

Where this comparison is limited, plainly, is that the scientist is dealing with describable and quantifiable truths, while the believer is dealing with the unknowable, with some One known only through the transformation and grace shown in creation, which was drawn forth from nothing by God's compassion. Whatever we know, including the belief in creation from nothing, we know first from a revelation which includes Scripture and the experience of the Jews and the church. (The major difference between Catholic, Orthodox, and some Anglican views of the church on the one hand, and most of Protestantism on the other, is the belief that the Holy Spirit really is present within this history. Such obviously historical phenomena as the early ecumenical councils, however much historical struggle may have been entangled in their debates, have enough of the Holy Spirit in them that we can see them as revealing God's will for the church.) The knowledge we can know apart from this can be experienced only in prayer and in waiting. Both the believer and the scientist must learn to wait and watch, sometimes with no very clear evidence or hope. What counts most here is attentiveness, alertness, care for all the small signals as well as the most obvious ones. If we are really waiting for the return of Christ, whatever that may be like — and it isn't up to us to know — we should be like people who are capable of attending to any sign. At the same time we must be "as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves," people who know the Mammon of Iniquity and can tell a con when they see one. Alertness, wari-

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ness, attention, a testing of the spirits, and careful listening are all part of what we have to bring to our work as Christians. The idea of looking forward to what redemption is supposed to mean, in a cosmic as well as a personal sense, is an important and neglected part of the Christian art of knowing. A failure to appreciate this inevitably reduces our expectation of redemption to our own set of dreams. John the Evangelist said, "we do not know what we shall be"; we have not taken the radical implications of this to heart.

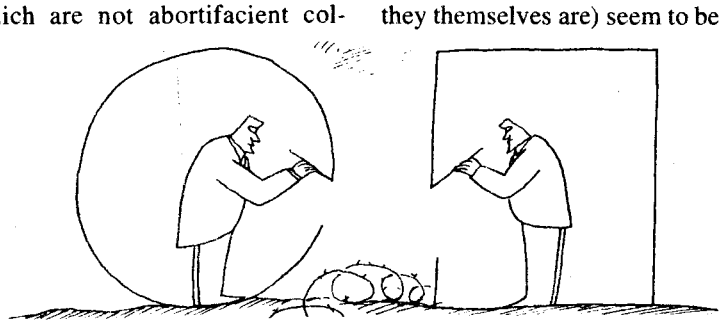
THIS UNKNOWING should lead to an attentiveness to those who disagree with us. There are a few arguments which ought to be mentioned here; I think they illustrate the point. One of them involves contraception, a subject on which almost everyone seems to have an opinion which closes out all others. Those who believe that contraception is a wonderful thing point to some truths which should be attended to by those who believe that it is clearly evil. There really is a population problem, and there are people who are too poor to care adequately for children, and there are women who should, for various physical and sometimes mental reasons, not have children, and there are people for whom methods depending on natural cycles don't work well, and it is easier to give attention to a few children rather than to a great number. In addition, there is an inadequacy to the simply utilitarian approach to sexuality — that it exists solely for the reproduction of the species is not quite disproved, but almost is, by the existence of female orgasm, which is not at all necessary to conception. Once the use of natural cycles to limit the number of children was allowed by the church, the argument against forms of contraception which are not abortifacient collapses, because a contraceptive intention is allowed.

A lot of these arguments will seem convincing to some people and repellent to others. I am one of those who finds them convincing. But something more needs to be said about contraception, and religious conservatives are saying it.

Even granting all of the above, which a lot of people would not, something new and potentially terrible was introduced into our thinking about sexuality and reproduction by contraceptive technology. It was the belief that a child must be a conscious decision, which has a dreadful corollary: an unplanned child is a mistake. The convenience of contraception leads us to think that our lives are a kind of real estate to be developed, a story we write ourselves, and if we focus exclusively on this idea, if it becomes completely convincing to us, some essential mystery and openness disappears. Without this we are less than human.

To allow both of these sets of ideas to inform us as fully as they should means that we live with an ambiguity which does not make us happy. To see contraception as something which may be necessary but which has a built-in darkness is not easy. Perhaps a society with a cultural sense of the tragic could deal with it better than we do. My point here, anyway, is that people on both sides of the issue have something important to teach one another.

There are other areas, obviously, where the same thing can be said. One of them involves the style of some evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants and some charismatic Catholics. It embarrasses the rest of us. We are often right to be embarrassed. To see another human being as a kind of conversion-fodder is wrong, and many of the people who ask if we are saved (maddeningly sure that they themselves are) seem to be trying to convince themselves by their earnestness even more than they try to convince us. I find their biblical fundamentalism intellectually, religiously, and morally untenable.



But is that all that embarrasses us? I began to wonder about this when someone I know pretty well got involved in an evangelical movement and went through a period in which he tried to convert all his friends. He and his wife, who was also involved in the same group, had gone through some rough times in their marriage, and he had been the sort of man who seems afraid of affection or tenderness. Both of them have moved through the initial convert-enthusiasm to something quieter and deeper. I am still uncomfortable with their religious jargon, but there is something genuine and transforming about their faith. He is a friendlier, more joyful man now. Something real happened there, and a discomfort with a style of hymn, a jargon, and an off-putting enthusiasm almost kept me from seeing it. What happened was that his experience led him to take prayer seriously as a transforming possibility. Nothing he had received from mainstream religion had brought the message across to him. Perhaps that can be blamed on the churches he had attended, or maybe not — but what cannot be denied is that his evangelical involvement came as a grace. It isn't easy, but it is necessary, to be critical of what needs criticizing in evangelical movements, and at the same time to see that our own embarrassment when we meet their members is sometimes an unwillingness, influenced more than anything else by what other people might think, to be as excited as we should be about what we claim to believe.

We can't, as a result of the openness recommended above (one which may fall away the next time a tract-pusher interrupts me in the middle of an enjoyable meal), refuse to take any position, or to disagree with those whose ideas we find wrong. But we should at least recognize that reason and knowing must be compassionate to be fully what they are meant to be, and we have to cultivate a humble willingness *not* to know, where we really cannot. JOHN GARVEY

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A CASE FOR PRO-LIFE FEMINISM

Abortion & the sexual agenda

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

THE ABORTION DEBATE continues. In the latest and perhaps most crucial development, pro-life feminists are contesting pro-choice feminist claims that abortion rights are prerequisites for women's full development and social equality. The outcome of this debate may be decisive for the culture as a whole. Pro-life feminists, like myself, argue on good feminist principles that women can never achieve the fulfillment of feminist goals in a society permissive toward abortion.

These new arguments over abortion take place within liberal political circles. This round of intense intra-feminist conflict has spiraled beyond earlier right-versus-left abortion debates, which focused on "tragic choices," medical judgments, and legal compromises. Feminist theorists of the pro-choice position now put forth the demand for unrestricted abortion rights as a *moral imperative* and insist upon women's right to complete reproductive freedom. They morally justify the present situation and current abortion practices. Thus it is all the more important that pro-life feminists articulate their different feminist perspective.

THIS IS THE second of two contrasting articles on the subject of abortion. In the April 11 issue of *Commonweal*, Joan C. Callahan argued that "there are insurmountable difficulties in finding a compelling argument for the recognition of fetuses as persons that could justify imposing on a woman the particularly intimate burden of bearing an unwanted child." In this article, Sidney Callahan (no relation) offers a critique of feminist arguments for the morality and legality of abortion, addressing from a radically different perspective some of the points raised in the earlier article. Sidney Callahan further argues that opposition to abortion is in keeping with an expanded and refocused feminist vision; ultimately, women's rights and fetal rights are linked. Both these articles were written independently, and like all signed articles in *Commonweal*, they do not necessarily represent the views of the editors, who reserve the right to add their own comments later.

THE EDITORS

These opposing arguments can best be seen when presented in turn. Perhaps the most highly developed feminist arguments for the morality and legality of abortion can be found in Beverly Wildung Harrison's *Our Right to Choose* (Beacon Press, 1983) and Rosalind Pollack Petchesky's *Abortion and Woman's Choice* (Longman, 1984). Obviously it is difficult to do justice to these complex arguments, which draw on diverse strands of philosophy and social theory and are often interwoven in pro-choice feminists' own version of a "seamless garment." Yet the fundamental feminist case for the morality of abortion, encompassing the views of Harrison and Petchesky, can be analyzed in terms of four central moral claims: (1) the moral right to control one's own body; (2) the moral necessity of autonomy and choice in personal responsibility; (3) the moral claim for the contingent value of fetal life; (4) the moral right of women to true social equality.

1. The moral right to control one's own body. Pro-choice feminism argues that a woman choosing an abortion is exercising a basic right of bodily integrity granted in our common law tradition. If she does not choose to be physically involved in the demands of a pregnancy and birth, she should not be compelled to be so against her will. Just because it is *her* body which is involved, a woman should have the right to terminate any pregnancy, which at this point in medical history is tantamount to terminating fetal life. No one can be forced to donate an organ or submit to other invasive physical procedures for however good a cause. Thus no woman should be

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subjected to "compulsory pregnancy." And it should be noted that in pregnancy much more than a passive biological process is at stake.

From one perspective, the fetus is, as Petchesky says, a "biological parasite" taking resources from the woman's body. During pregnancy, a woman's whole life and energies will be actively involved in the nine-month process. Gestation and childbirth involve physical and psychological risks. After childbirth a woman will either be a mother who must undertake a twenty-year responsibility for childrearing, or face giving up her child for adoption or institutionalization. Since hers is the body, hers the risk, hers the burden, it is only just that she alone should be free to decide on pregnancy or abortion.

This moral claim to abortion, according to the pro-choice feminists, is especially valid in an individualistic society in which women cannot count on medical care or social support in pregnancy, childbirth, or childrearing. A moral abortion decision is never made in a social vacuum, but in the real life society which exists here and now.

2. The moral necessity of autonomy and choice in personal responsibility. Beyond the claim for individual *bodily* integrity, the pro-choice feminists claim that to be a full adult *morally*, a woman must be able to make responsible life commitments. To plan, choose, and exercise personal responsibility, one must have control of reproduction. A woman must be able to make yes or no decisions about a specific pregnancy, according to her present situation, resources, prior commitments, and life plan. Only with such reproductive freedom can a woman have the moral autonomy necessary to make mature commitments, in the area of family, work, or education.

Contraception provides a measure of personal control, but contraceptive failure or other chance events can too easily result in involuntary pregnancy. Only free access to abortion can provide the necessary guarantee. The chance biological process of an involuntary pregnancy should not be allowed to override all the other personal commitments and responsibilities a woman has: to others, to family, to work, to education, to her future development, health, or well-being. Without reproductive freedom, women's personal moral agency and human consciousness are subjected to biology and chance.

3. The moral claim for the contingent value of fetal life. Pro-choice feminist exponents like Harrison and Petchesky claim that the value of fetal life is contingent upon the woman's free consent and subjective acceptance. The fetus must be invested with maternal valuing in order to become human. This process of "humanization" through personal consciousness and "sociality" can only be bestowed by the woman in whose body and psychosocial system a new life must mature. The meaning and value of fetal life are constructed by the woman; without this personal conferral there only exists a biological, physiological process. Thus fetal interests or fetal rights can never outweigh the woman's prior interest and rights. If a woman does not consent to invest her pregnancy with meaning or value, then the merely biological process can be freely terminated. Prior to her own free choice and conscious investment, a woman cannot be described as a "mother" nor can a "child" be said to exist.

Moreover, in cases of voluntary pregnancy, a woman can withdraw consent if fetal genetic defects or some other problem emerges at any time before birth. Late abortion should thus be granted without legal restrictions. Even the minimal qualifications and limitations on women embedded in *Roe v. Wade* are unacceptable — repressive remnants of patriarchal unwillingness to give power to women.

4. The moral right of women to full social equality. Women have a moral right to full social equality. They should not be restricted or subordinated because of their sex. But this morally required equality cannot be realized without abortion's certain control of reproduction. Female social equality depends upon being able to compete and participate as freely as males can in the structures of educational and economic life. If a woman cannot control when and how she will be pregnant or rear children, she is at a distinct disadvantage, especially in our male-dominated world.

Psychological equality and well-being is also at stake. Women must enjoy the basic right of a person to the free exercise of heterosexual intercourse and full sexual expression, separated from procreation. No less than males, women should be able to be sexually active without the constantly inhibiting fear of pregnancy. Abortion is necessary for women's sexual fulfillment and the growth of uninhibited feminine self-confidence and ownership of their sexual powers.

But true sexual and reproductive freedom means freedom to procreate as well as to inhibit fertility. Pro-choice feminists are also worried that women's freedom to reproduce will be curtailed through the abuse of sterilization and needless hysterectomies. Besides the punitive tendencies of a male-dominated healthcare system, especially in response to repeated abortions or welfare pregnancies, there are other economic and social pressures inhibiting reproduction. Genuine reproductive freedom implies that day care, medical care, and financial support would be provided mothers, while fathers would take their full share in the burdens and delights of raising children.

Many pro-choice feminists identify feminist ideals with communitarian, ecologically sensitive approaches to reshaping society. Following theorists like Sara Ruddick and Carol Gilligan, they link abortion rights with the growth of "maternal thinking" in our heretofore patriarchal society. Maternal thinking is loosely defined as a responsible commitment to the loving nurture of specific human beings as they actually exist in socially embedded interpersonal contexts. It is a moral perspective very different from the abstract, competitive, isolated, and principled rigidity so characteristic of patriarchy.

HOW DOES A pro-life feminist respond to these arguments? Pro-life feminists grant the good intentions of their pro-choice counterparts but protest that the pro-choice position is flawed, morally inadequate, and inconsistent with feminism's basic demands for justice. Pro-life feminists champion a more

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encompassing moral ideal. They recognize the claims of fetal life and offer a different perspective on what is good for women. The feminist vision is expanded and refocused.

1. From the moral right to control one's own body to a more inclusive ideal of justice. The moral right to control one's own body does apply to cases of organ transplants, mastectomies, contraception, and sterilization; but it is not a conceptualization adequate for abortion. The abortion dilemma is caused by the fact that 266 days following a conception in one body, another body will emerge. One's own body no longer exists as a single unit but is engendering another organism's life. This dynamic passage from conception to birth is genetically ordered and universally found in the human species. Pregnancy is not like the growth of cancer or infestation by a biological parasite; it is the way every human being enters the world. Strained philosophical analogies fail to apply: having a baby is not like rescuing a drowning person, being hooked up to a famous violinist's artificial life-support system, donating organs for transplant — or anything else.

As embryology and fetology advance, it becomes clear that human development is a continuum. Just as astronomers are studying the first three minutes in the genesis of the universe, so the first moments, days, and weeks at the beginning of human life are the subject of increasing scientific attention. While neonatology pushes the definition of viability ever earlier, ultrasound and fetology expand the concept of the patient in utero. Within such a continuous growth process, it is hard to defend logically any demarcation point after conception as the point at which an immature form of human life is so different from the day before or the day after, that it can be morally or legally discounted as a non-person. Even the moment of birth can hardly differentiate a nine-month fetus from a newborn. It is not surprising that those who countenance late abortions are logically led to endorse selective infanticide.

The same legal tradition which in our society guarantees the right to control one's own body firmly recognizes the wrongfulness of harming other bodies, however immature, dependent, different looking, or powerless. The handicapped, the retarded, and newborns are legally protected from deliberate harm. Pro-life feminists reject the suppositions that would except the unborn from this protection.

After all, debates similar to those about the fetus were once conducted about feminine personhood. Just as women, or blacks, were considered too different, too underdeveloped, too "biological," to have souls or to possess legal rights, so the fetus is now seen as "merely" biological life, subsidiary to a person. A woman was once viewed as incorporated into the "one flesh" of her husband's person; she too was a form of bodily property. In all patriarchal unjust systems, lesser orders of human life are granted rights only when wanted, chosen, or invested with value by the powerful.

Fortunately, in the course of civilization there has been a gradual realization that justice demands the powerless and dependent be protected against the uses of power wielded unilaterally. No human can be treated as a means to an end without consent. The fetus is an immature, dependent form of human life which only needs time and protection to develop. Surely, immaturity and dependence are not crimes.

In an effort to think about the essential requirements of a just society, philosophers like John Rawls recommend imagining yourself in an "original position," in which your position in the society to be created is hidden by a "veil of ignorance." You will have to weigh the possibility that any inequalities inherent in that society's practices may rebound upon you in the worst, as well as in the best, conceivable way. This thought experiment helps ensure justice for all.

Beverly Harrison argues that in such an envisioning of society everyone would institute abortion rights in order to guarantee that if one turned out to be a woman one would have reproductive freedom. But surely in the original position and behind the "veil of ignorance," you would have to contemplate the possibility of being the particular fetus to be aborted. Since everyone has passed through the fetal stage of development, it is false to refuse to imagine oneself in this state when thinking about a potential world in which justice would govern. Would it be just that an embryonic life — in half the cases, of course, a female life — be sacrificed to the right of a woman's control over her own body? A woman may be pregnant without consent and experience a great many penalties, but a fetus killed without consent pays the ultimate penalty.

It does not matter (*The Silent Scream* notwithstanding) whether the fetus being killed is fully conscious or feels pain. We do not sanction killing the innocent if it can be done painlessly or without the victim's awareness. Consciousness becomes important to the abortion debate because it is used as a criterion for the "personhood" so often seen as the prerequisite for legal protection. Yet certain philosophers set the standard of personhood so high that half the human race could not meet the criteria during most of their waking hours (let alone their sleeping ones). Sentience, self-consciousness, rational decision-making, social participation? Surely no infant, or child under two, could qualify. Either our idea of person must be expanded or another criterion, such as human life itself, be employed to protect the weak in a just society. Pro-life feminists who defend the fetus empathetically identify with an immature state of growth passed through by themselves, their children, and everyone now alive.

IT ALSO seems a travesty of just procedures that a pregnant woman now, in effect, acts as sole judge of her own case, under the most stressful conditions. Yes, one can acknowledge that the pregnant woman will be subject to the potential burdens arising from a pregnancy, but it has never been thought right to have an interested party, especially the more powerful party, decide his or her own case when there may be a conflict of interest. If one considers the matter as a case of a powerful versus a powerless, silenced claimant, the pro-choice feminist argument can rightly be inverted: since hers is the body, hers the risk, and hers the greater burden, then how in fairness can a woman be the sole judge of the fetal right to life?

Human ambivalence, a bias toward self-interest, and emo-

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tional stress have always been recognized as endangering judgment. Freud declared that love and hate are so entwined that if instant thoughts could kill, we would all be dead in the bosom of our families. In the case of a woman's involuntary pregnancy, a complex, long-term solution requiring effort and energy has to compete with the immediate solution offered by a morning's visit to an abortion clinic. On the simple, perceptual plane, with imagination and thinking curtailed, the speed, ease, and privacy of abortion, combined with the small size of the embryo, tend to make early abortions seem less morally serious — even though speed, size, technical ease, and the private nature of an act have no moral standing.

As the most recent immigrants from non-personhood, feminists have traditionally fought for justice for themselves and the world. Women rally to feminism as a new and better way to live. Rejecting male aggression and destruction, feminists seek alternative, peaceful, ecologically sensitive means to resolve conflicts while respecting human potentiality. It is a chilling inconsistency to see pro-choice feminists demanding continued access to assembly-line, technological methods of fetal killing — the vacuum aspirator, prostaglandins, and dilation and evacuation. It is a betrayal of feminism,

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which has built the struggle for justice on the bedrock of women's empathy. After all, "maternal thinking" receives its name from a mother's unconditional acceptance and nurture of dependent, immature life. It is difficult to develop concern for women, children, the poor and the dispossessed — and to care about peace — and at the same time ignore fetal life.

2. From the necessity of autonomy and choice in personal responsibility to an expanded sense of responsibility. A distorted idea of morality overemphasizes individual autonomy and active choice. Morality has often been viewed too exclusively as a matter of human agency and decisive action. In moral behavior persons must explicitly choose and aggressively exert their wills to intervene in the natural and social environments. The human will dominates the body, overcomes the given, breaks out of the material limits of nature. Thus if one does not choose to be pregnant or cannot rear a child, who must be given up for adoption, then better to abort the pregnancy. Willing, planning, choosing one's moral commitments through the contracting of one's individual resources becomes the premier model of moral responsibility.

But morality also consists of the good and worthy acceptance of the unexpected events that life presents. Responsiveness and response-ability to things unchosen are also instances of the highest human moral capacity. Morality is not confined to contracted agreements of isolated individuals. Yes, one is obligated by explicit contracts freely initiated, but human beings are also obligated by implicit compacts and involuntary relationships in which persons simply find themselves. To be embedded in a family, a neighborhood, a social system, brings moral obligations which were never entered into with informed consent.

Parent-child relationships are one instance of implicit moral obligations arising by virtue of our being part of the interdependent human community. A woman, involuntarily pregnant, has a moral obligation to the now-existing dependent fetus whether she explicitly consented to its existence or not. No pro-life feminist would dispute the forceful observations of pro-choice feminists about the extreme difficulties that bearing an unwanted child in our society can entail. But the stronger force of the fetal claim presses a woman to accept these burdens; the fetus possesses rights arising from its extreme need and the interdependency and unity of humankind. The woman's moral obligation arises both from her status as a human being embedded in the interdependent human community and her unique lifegiving female reproductive power. To follow the pro-choice feminist ideology of insistent individualistic autonomy and control is to betray a fundamental basis of the moral life.

3. From the moral claim of the contingent value of fetal life to the moral claim for the intrinsic value of human life. The feminist pro-choice position which claims that the value of the fetus is contingent upon the pregnant woman's bestowal — or willed, conscious "construction" — of humanhood is seriously flawed. The inadequacies of this position flow from the erroneous premises (1) that human value and rights can be granted by individual will; (2) that the individual woman's consciousness can exist and operate in an *a priori* isolated fashion; and (3) that "mere" biological, genetic human life has little meaning. Pro-life feminism takes a very different stance to life and nature.

Human life from the beginning to the end of development *has* intrinsic value, which does not depend on meeting the selective criteria or tests set up by powerful others. A fundamental humanist assumption is at stake here. Either we are going to value embodied human life and humanity as a good thing, or take some variant of the nihilist position that assumes human life is just one more random occurrence in the universe such that each instance of human life must explicitly be justified to prove itself worthy to continue. When faced with a new life, or an involuntary pregnancy, there is a world of difference in whether one first asks, "Why continue?" or "Why not?" Where is the burden of proof going to rest? The concept of "compulsory pregnancy" is as distorted as labeling life "compulsory aging."

In a sound moral tradition, human rights arise from human needs, and it is the very nature of a right, or valid claim upon another, that it cannot be denied, conditionally delayed, or rescinded by more powerful others at their behest. It seems fallacious to hold that in the case of the fetus it is the pregnant woman alone who gives or removes its right to life and human

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status solely through her subjective conscious investment or "humanization." Surely no pregnant woman (or any other individual member of the species) has created her own human nature by an individually willed act of consciousness, nor for that matter been able to guarantee her own human rights. An individual woman and the unique individual embryonic life within her can only exist because of their participation in the genetic inheritance of the human species as a whole. Biological life should never be discounted. Membership in the species, or collective human family, is the basis for human solidarity, equality, and natural human rights.

4. The moral right of women to full social equality from a pro-life feminist perspective. Pro-life feminists and pro-choice feminists are totally agreed on the moral right of women to the full social equality so far denied them. The disagreement between them concerns the definition of the desired goal and the best means to get there. Permissive abortion laws do not bring women reproductive freedom, social equality, sexual fulfillment, or full personal development.

Pragmatic failures of a pro-choice feminist position combined with a lack of moral vision are, in fact, causing disaffection among young women. Middle-aged pro-choice feminists blamed the "big chill" on the general conservative backlash. But they should look rather to their own elitist acceptance of male models of sex and to the sad picture they present of women's lives. Pitting women against their own offspring is not only morally offensive, it is psychologically and politically destructive. Women will never climb to equality and social empowerment over mounds of dead fetuses, numbering now in the millions. As long as most women choose to bear children, they stand to gain from the same constellation of attitudes and institutions that will also protect the fetus in the woman's womb — and they stand to lose from the cultural assumptions that support permissive abortion. Despite temporary conflicts of interest, feminine and fetal liberation are ultimately one and the same cause.

Women's rights and liberation are pragmatically linked to fetal rights because to obtain true equality, women need (1) more social support and changes in the structure of society, and (2) increased self-confidence, self-expectations, and self-esteem. Society in general, and men in particular, have to provide women more support in rearing the next generation, or our devastating feminization of poverty will continue. But if a woman claims the right to decide by herself whether the fetus becomes a child or not, what does this do to paternal and communal responsibility? Why should men share responsibility for child support or childrearing if they cannot share in what is asserted to be the woman's sole decision? Furthermore, if explicit intentions and consciously accepted contracts are necessary for moral obligations, why should men be held responsible for what *they* do not voluntarily choose to happen? By pro-choice reasoning, a man who does not want to have a child, or whose contraceptive fails, can be exempted from the responsibilities of fatherhood and child support. Traditionally, many men have been laggards in assuming parental responsibility and support for their children; ironically, ready abortion, often advocated as a response to male dereliction, legitimizes male irresponsibility and paves the way for even more male detachment and lack of commitment.

For that matter, why should the state provide a system of day-care or child support, or require workplaces to accommodate women's maternity and the needs of childrearing? Permissive abortion, granted in the name of women's privacy and reproductive freedom, ratifies the view that pregnancies and children are a woman's private individual responsibility. More and more frequently, we hear some version of this old rationalization: if she refuses to get rid of it, it's her problem. A child becomes a product of the individual woman's freely chosen investment, a form of private property resulting from her own cost-benefit calculation. The larger community is relieved of moral responsibility.

With legal abortion freely available, a clear cultural message is given: conception and pregnancy are no longer serious moral matters. With abortion as an acceptable alternative, contraception is not as responsibly used; women take risks, often at the urging of male sexual partners. Repeat abortions increase, with all their psychological and medical repercussions. With more abortion there is more abortion. Behavior shapes thought as well as the other way round. One tends to justify morally what one has done; what becomes commonplace and institutionalized seems harmless. Habituation is a powerful psychological force. Psychologically it is also true that whatever is avoided becomes more threatening; in phobias it is the retreat from anxiety-producing events which reinforces future avoidance. Women begin to see themselves as too weak to cope with involuntary pregnancies. Finally, through the potency of social pressure and the force of inertia, it becomes more and more difficult, in fact almost unthinkable, *not* to use abortion to solve problem pregnancies. Abortion becomes no longer a choice but a "necessity."

But "necessity," beyond the organic failure and death of the body, is a dynamic social construction open to interpretation. The thrust of present feminist pro-choice arguments can only increase the justifiable indications for "necessary" abortion; every unwanted fetal handicap becomes more and more unacceptable. Repeatedly assured that in the name of reproductive freedom, women have a right to specify which pregnancies and which children they will accept, women justify sex selection, and abort unwanted females. Female infanticide, after all, is probably as old a custom as the human species possesses. Indeed, all kinds of selection of the fit and the favored for the good of the family and the tribe have always existed. Selective extinction is no new program.

THERE ARE FAR BETTER goals for feminists to pursue. Pro-life feminists seek to expand and deepen the more communitarian, maternal elements of feminism — and move society from its male-dominated course. First and foremost, women have to insist upon a different, woman-centered approach to sex and reproduction. While Margaret Mead stressed the "womb envy" of males in other societies, it has been more

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By pro-choice reasoning, a man who does not want a child or whose contraceptive fails can be exempted from the responsibilities of fatherhood. . . .

or less repressed in our own. In our male-dominated world, what men don't do, doesn't count. Pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing have been characterized as passive, debilitating, animal-like. The disease model of pregnancy and birth has been entrenched. This female disease or impairment, with its attendant "female troubles," naturally handicaps women in the "real" world of hunting, war, and the corporate fast track. Many pro-choice feminists, deliberately childless, adopt the male perspective when they cite the "basic injustice that women have to bear the babies," instead of seeing the injustice in the fact that men cannot. Women's biologically unique capacity and privilege has been denied, despised, and suppressed under male domination; unfortunately, many women have fallen for the phallic fallacy.

Childbirth often appears in pro-choice literature as a painful, traumatic, life-threatening experience. Yet giving birth is accurately seen as an arduous but normal exercise of lifegiving power, a violent and ecstatic peak experience, which men can never know. Ironically, some pro-choice men and women think and talk of pregnancy and childbirth with the same repugnance that ancient ascetics displayed toward orgasms and sexual intercourse. The similarity may not be accidental. The obstetrician Niles Newton, herself a mother, has written of the extended threefold sexuality of women, who can experience orgasm, birth, and nursing as passionate pleasure-giving experiences. All of these are involuntary processes of the female body. Only orgasm, which males share, has been glorified as an involuntary function that is nature's great gift; the involuntary feminine processes of childbirth and nursing have been seen as bondage to biology.

Fully accepting our bodies as ourselves, what should women want? I think women will only flourish when there is a feminization of sexuality, very different from the current cultural trend toward masculinizing female sexuality. Women can never have the self-confidence and self-esteem they need to achieve feminist goals in society until a more holistic, feminine model of sexuality becomes the dominant cultural ethos. To say this affirms the view that men and women differ in the domain of sexual functioning, although they are more alike than different in other personality characteristics and competencies. For those of us committed to achieving sexual equality in the culture, it may be hard to accept the fact that sexual differences make it imperative to talk of distinct male and female models of sexuality. But if one wants to change sexual roles, one has to recognize pre-existing conditions. A great deal of evidence is accumulating which points to biological pressures for different male and female sexual functioning.

Males always and everywhere have been more physically aggressive and more likely to fuse sexuality with aggression and dominance. Females may be more variable in their sexuality, but since Masters and Johnson, we know that women have a greater capacity than men for repeated orgasm and a more tenuous path to arousal and orgasmic release. Most obviously, women also have a far greater sociobiological investment in the act of human reproduction. On the whole, women as compared to men possess a sexuality which is more complex, more intense, more extended in time, involving higher investment, risks, and psychosocial involvement.

CONSIDERING THE differences in sexual functioning, it is not surprising that men and women in the same culture have often constructed different sexual ideals. In Western culture, since the nineteenth century at least, most women have espoused a version of sexual functioning in which sex acts are embedded within deep emotional bonds and secure long-term commitments. Within these committed "pair bonds" males assume parental obligations. In the idealized Victorian version of the Christian sexual ethic, culturally endorsed and maintained by women, the double standard was not countenanced. Men and women did not need to marry to be whole persons, but if they did engage in sexual functioning, they were to be equally chaste, faithful, responsible, loving, and parentally concerned. Many of the most influential women in the nineteenth-century women's movement preached and lived this sexual ethic, often by the side of exemplary feminist men. While the ideal has never been universally obtained, a culturally dominant demand for monogamy, self-control, and emotionally bonded and committed sex works well for women in every stage of their sexual life cycles. When love, chastity, fidelity, and commitment for better or worse are the ascendant cultural prerequisites for sexual functioning, young girls and women expect protection from rape and seduction, adult women justifiably demand male support in childrearing, and older women are more protected from abandonment as their biological attractions wane.

Of course, these feminine sexual ideals always coexisted in competition with another view. A more male-oriented model of erotic or amative sexuality endorses sexual permissiveness without long-term commitment or reproductive focus. Erotic sexuality emphasizes pleasure, play, passion, individual self-expression, and romantic games of courtship and conquest. It is assumed that a variety of partners and sexual experiences are necessary to stimulate romantic passion. This erotic model of the sexual life has often worked satisfactorily for men, both heterosexual and gay, and for certain cultural elites. But for the average woman, it is quite destructive. Women can only play the erotic game successfully when like the "*Cosmopolitan* woman," they are young, physically attractive, economically powerful, and fulfilled enough in a career to be willing to sacrifice family life. Abortion is also required. As our society

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increasingly endorses this male-oriented, permissive view of sexuality, it is all too ready to give women abortion on demand. Abortion helps a woman's body be more like a man's. It has been observed that *Roe v. Wade* removed the last defense women possessed against male sexual demands.

Unfortunately, the modern feminist movement made a mistaken move at a critical juncture. Rightly rebelling against patriarchy, unequal education, restricted work opportunities, and women's downtrodden political status, feminists also rejected the nineteenth-century feminine sexual ethic. Amative, erotic, permissive sexuality (along with abortion rights) became symbolically identified with other struggles for social equality in education, work, and politics. This feminist mistake also turned off many potential recruits among women who could not deny the positive dimensions of their own traditional feminine roles, nor their allegiance to the older feminine sexual ethic of love and fidelity.

An ironic situation then arose in which many pro-choice feminists preach their own double standard. In the world of work and career, women are urged to grow up, to display mature self-discipline and self-control; they are told to persevere in long-term commitments, to cope with unexpected obstacles by learning to tough out the inevitable sufferings and setbacks entailed in life and work. But this mature ethic of commitment and self-discipline, recommended as the only way to progress in the world of work and personal achievement, is discounted in the domain of sexuality.

In pro-choice feminism, a permissive, erotic view of sexuality is assumed to be the only option. Sexual intercourse with a variety of partners is seen as "inevitable" from a young age and as a positive growth experience to be managed by access to contraception and abortion. Unfortunately, the pervasive cultural conviction that adolescents, or their elders, cannot exercise sexual self-control, undermines the responsible use of contraception. When a pregnancy occurs, the first abortion is viewed in some pro-choice circles as a *rite de passage*. Responsibly choosing an abortion supposedly ensures that a young woman will take charge of her own life, make her own decisions, and carefully practice contraception. But the social dynamics of a permissive, erotic model of sexuality, coupled with permissive laws, work toward repeat abortions. Instead of being empowered by their abortion choices, young women having abortions are confronting the debilitating reality of *not* bringing a baby into the world; *not* being able to count on a committed male partner; *not* accounting oneself strong enough, or the master of enough resources, to avoid killing the fetus. Young women are hardly going to develop the self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-confidence necessary to confront a male-dominated society through abortion.

The male-oriented sexual orientation has been harmful to women and children. It has helped bring us epidemics of venereal disease, infertility, pornography, sexual abuse, adolescent pregnancy, divorce, displaced older women, and abortion. Will these signals of something amiss stimulate pro-choice feminists to rethink what kind of sex ideal really serves women's best interests? While the erotic model cannot encompass commitment, the committed model can — happily — encompass and encourage romance, passion, and playfulness. In fact, within the security of long-term commitments, women may be more likely to experience sexual pleasure and fulfillment.

THE PRO-LIFE FEMINIST position is not a return to the old feminine mystique. That espousal of "the eternal feminine" erred by viewing sexuality as so sacred that it cannot be humanly shaped at all. Woman's *whole* nature was supposed to be opposite to man's, necessitating complementary and radically different social roles. Followed to its logical conclusion, such a view presumes that reproductive and sexual experience is necessary for human fulfillment. But as the early feminists insisted, no woman has to marry or engage in sexual intercourse to be fulfilled, nor does a woman have to give birth and raise children to be complete, nor must she stay home and function as an earth mother. But female sexuality does need to be deeply respected as a unique potential and trust. Since most contraceptives and sterilization procedures really do involve only the woman's body rather than destroying new life, they can be an acceptable and responsible moral option.

With sterilization available to accelerate the inevitable natural ending of fertility and childbearing, a woman confronts only a limited number of years in which she exercises her reproductive trust and may have to respond to an unplanned pregnancy. Responsible use of contraception can lower the probabilities even more. Yet abortion is not decreasing. The reason is the current permissive attitude embodied in the law, not the "hard cases" which constitute 3 percent of today's abortions. Since attitudes, the law, and behavior interact, pro-life feminists conclude that unless there is an enforced limitation of abortion, which currently confirms the sexual and social status quo, alternatives will never be developed. For women to get what they need in order to combine childbearing, education, and careers, society has to recognize that female bodies come with wombs. Women and their reproductive power, and the children women have, must be supported in new ways. Another and different round of feminist consciousness-raising is needed in which all of women's potential is accorded respect. This time, instead of humbly buying entrée by conforming to male lifestyles, women will demand that society accommodate to them.

New feminist efforts to rethink the meaning of sexuality, femininity, and reproduction are all the more vital as new techniques for artificial reproduction, surrogate motherhood, and the like present a whole new set of dilemmas. In the long run, the very long run, the abortion debate may be merely the opening round in a series of far-reaching struggles over the role of human sexuality and the ethics of reproduction. Significant changes in the culture, both positive and negative in outcome, may begin as local storms of controversy. We may be at one of those vaguely realized thresholds when we had best come to full attention. What kind of people are we going to be? Pro-life feminists pursue a vision for their sisters, daughters, and granddaughters. Will their great-granddaughters be grateful?

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REFUGEES IN A WAR THAT WON'T END

Vietnam's American children

JOSEPH CERQUONE

YOUR FACE is young. It is being peered at by strangers who are searching for "American" features. You have to tell them your story as they look you over. You have to explain why you, a Vietnamese, deserve to go to the U.S., the land of your missing father, a father you have never seen or don't remember.

Next, the questioners ask for documents. Their manner is pleasant, but they have asked for the impossible — a birth certificate, proof that the Vietnamese woman sitting next to you is your mother. She's nervous and intimidated, poor and uneducated, afraid of making an honest mistake that will jeopardize the quest to leave. Eventually the questions end, and the waiting begins again. It is always a matter of waiting. Will you and your mother ever know whether you can leave Vietnam for the U.S.?

So goes the "ODP interview," the screening process under the UN-administered Orderly Departure Program, through which significant numbers of American children, the war-time progeny of American fathers and Vietnamese mothers, can leave Vietnam legally. History has not been kind to these children. For years after the war, the existence of Amerasians in Vietnam was scarcely acknowledged by both the American and the Vietnamese governments. Then suddenly, four years ago, Vietnam decided to let them leave, agreeing that the Amerasians would be better off in the U.S. Caught unaware, the U.S. struggled to devise a plan to accept the children, but debate arose between the two governments on how the Amerasians should get to the U.S. Eventually, the Reagan administration picked the ODP, an emigration program available theoretically to anyone in Vietnam, including Amerasians. Reluctantly, the Vietnamese went along with the choice.

For all this, not much has changed. Indeed, only slightly more than 3,000 Amerasians have arrived in the U.S. so far, while an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 remain in Vietnam, subject to various forms of discrimination. Advocates say the low U.S. arrival total is scandalous. The misfortune compounds as the older these sons and daughters become, the harder it is for them to adapt to the land of their fathers.

As of January 1, Vietnam blocked all new legal departure attempts by halting its participation in ODP processing. The moratorium reflected Vietnamese unhappiness over the fact that people with exit visas — non-Amerasians mostly — had yet to be taken by so-called receiving countries. Led by the U.S., which disputed the Vietnamese claim of an ODP "backlog," these countries, which include France, Australia, and Canada, have balked increasingly at taking émigrés for various reasons; American officials, for example, complain these émigrés have not met immigration priorities.

Though Amerasians who had already cleared Vietnamese processing continued leaving in early 1986, by March their exodus had come to a near standstill. The road to nowhere which the Amerasians have been on since the end of the Vietnam War threatened to come full circle.

THAT ROAD was built ever so slowly. Preoccupied with reordering its society, Vietnam never raised the Amerasian issue during the immediate postwar period. The U.S., on the other hand, ignored it for different reasons, not the least of which was embarrassment over this aspect of its war-time legacy. But while governments did nothing, the Amerasians continued to live as outcasts in their native land. By most accounts, they have not been subject to a *formal* policy of discrimination. (The Vietnamese government maintains that the children have access to education and employment, and may become citizens at age eighteen.) At root, though, the children have tumbled into a social, political, and economic crack. Vietnam values not only racial purity, but also fatherhood, neither of which the Amerasian presence suggests. Social oddities, they encounter antagonism and mistrust. Their very faces are a reminder of a former enemy. They stare from the pit of poverty that encircles most people in Vietnam. "They don't encounter outright segregation," says Grace Sum, executive director of the Pearl Buck Foundation, long a leading Amerasian advocate. "But they are very poor and having a rough time."

Children of blacks have had it the hardest. Social workers indicate that because of racial intolerance in Vietnamese society, black progeny identify more with the U.S. Ironically, these children have had the most difficulty adjusting once they leave. (The reverse has been true for Amerasians fathered by Caucasians.) Virtually all are shut off from any sense of what their absent parents are like. In *Doi Dung Sua Me*, a popular play in Hanoi about a black Amerasian child abandoned in

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South Vietnam, the child of mixed parents cries out hauntingly, "Who am I?"

Such cries did not come from the first Amerasian arrivals in the U.S. Seven years after the end of the war, in 1982 — both Vietnam and the U.S. having been lobbied hard by private American groups — the first Amerasians finally left Vietnam and arrived in the U.S. Officially, Hanoi agreed to the departures out of humanitarian concern for the Amerasians' welfare. But unofficially, more selfish motives — such as an interest in better relations with the West and an unwillingness to care any longer for the Amerasians — played a part in the departures.

The initial arrivals in the U.S. in 1982 proved to be unique. They came, in large measure, as the result of the interest of their fathers' efforts. Even more important in the eyes of immigration law, they disembarked with citizenship papers as they approached U.S. Customs.

These details never reached the television screens of America which beamed pictures of emotional reunions and the signing by President Reagan (at approximately the same time as the first arrivals) of P.L. 97-359, federal legislation which gave priority to Amerasian emigration bids. The coincidence of these events strongly suggested that years of negligence had ended. But they hadn't. The new law, overly restrictive and inappropriate, couldn't be applied to Amerasians in Vietnam because American-Vietnamese consular relations did not exist. P.L. 97-359 turned out to be patently ineffective, and in retrospect the events of 1982 a cruel tease. Vietnam and the U.S. not only remain divided on Amerasians, but address the issue in ways freighted with politics rather than concern for the children's needs.

At a glance, what has happened since 1982 seems rather simple. Vietnam has repeatedly proposed sweeping and swift departures under which the Amerasians would go to the U.S. as immigrants. American officials have constantly rejected such offers, saying the children don't fit into any immigrant category in federal law.

Faced with Vietnam's release offer, however, the U.S. State Department eventually turned to the ODP program, which had begun in 1979. Stationed in Ho Chi Minh City, ODP interviewers screen people who have been cleared by Vietnam. Cases are then weighed by receiving countries to see if they qualify for entry. The U.S. decided it could accept the Amerasians via ODP because the program would classify them as "refugees," a legal category for which an admissions ceiling was already in existence.

As time went by, the ODP choice received more emphasis. In the fall of 1984, Secretary of State George Shultz told Congress that the Reagan administration planned to establish an "Amerasian subprogram" within its ODP quota that would take as many as 5,000 Amerasians and their relatives annually over a three-year period. "Because of their undisputed ties to our country," Shultz said, "these children and family members are of special interest . . . ." The subprogram became the Amerasians' avenue to the U.S. until Vietnam halted ODP processing this January.

Curiously, the Shultz announcement suggested that matters could be resolved by 1987, even though the acceptance rate of the plan seemed out of sync with numerical estimates of Amerasians. Furthermore, simple arithmetic indicates that the scheme failed to include adequate numbers of relatives, people whose presence is regarded as crucial for the children's adjustment in the U.S.

According to State Department statistics, approximately 3,200 Amerasians and 4,500 family members have now reached the U.S. In other words, each Amerasian has arrived with 1.4 relatives. Thus, 10,000 children, a low estimate for their actual number in Vietnam, may realistically mean 24,000 total arrivals if family members are included, well above the arrival ceiling under the Shultz plan.

MORE COMPLICATED and contradictory matters lie behind these rates and totals. Vietnam charges, for example, that children with exit visas are not being taken by the U.S. "I don't have the exact number," Nguyen Dan Quang, Vietnam's First Secretary to the UN, said earlier this year, "but there are many." Some, he said, are "in the streets."

United States and United Nations sources, and at least one former ODP interviewer who recently spent a year in Ho Chi Minh City, say otherwise. They indicate Vietnam actually produced only about 4,000 Amerasians and relatives last year, or 1,000 fewer than could have been taken by the U.S. Asked how the Vietnamese explain this discrepancy, a diplomatic source said: "They're fuzzy on it."

The answer to such a puzzle is a mix of factors. The shortfall may stem from Vietnam's objection to the refugee classification, processing procedures, and ceilings of the ODP program. The Vietnamese have long called for a well-oiled, bilateral departure arrangement with the U.S. in which those features would be absent. "These are not refugees," Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach reportedly told American visitors in October. "They are your children." More recently, Nguyen expressed Vietnamese impatience with the processing Amerasians undergo from U.S. officials as they pass through ODP. "All you have to do is see their faces and take them," he said.

But such eagerness is belied by Vietnam's restrictiveness in granting visas to ODP interviewers, a factor which in the opinion of some sources has hampered departures. There is also a question whether accurate counts of Amerasian children are available. Vietnamese estimates may be unrealistic. First Secretary Nguyen said in early January that his country was "still getting reports in" on Amerasians, though he used the 10,000 to 15,000 range normally given for the children. The capacity of the Vietnamese for a census is in question. There is general agreement that it is easy to find Amerasians in places such as Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) and Da Nang, but the countryside is another story. Mothers may have been moved there under the Communists' plans for New Economic Zones, or may have sought refuge there, fearing that their obvious American bonds would make them targets for persecution. Then, there is the question of whether local authorities would take an interest in counting Amerasians even if they were directed to by Hanoi. The U.S. Catholic Conference

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notes in a recent report that these officials have not been consistent about advertising the chance for exiting under ODP.

Furthermore, an unknown number of Amerasians are believed to be cut-off from ODP altogether because they lack the proper documents. In Vietnam, the necessary first step toward departure, i.e., obtaining an exit visa, is "haphazard, labyrinthine, and exasperatingly slow," according to the report by the Catholic Conference.

Echoing others who question Vietnam's ability to locate the children, the one-time ODP interviewer explained that Vietnam may be "metering out" the Amerasians it knows of in order to sustain American interest in ODP. For despite their own suspension of the ODP program, the Vietnamese are seen as hoping it will remove people they regard as undesirables, and to preclude the embarrassment of boat refugees.

Such considerations, however, don't erase the fact that Vietnam, regardless of its self-professed humanitarianism toward the children, has quashed processing new Amerasian cases by virtue of its ODP moratorium.

ON THE AMERICAN side, the gap between what has been said about Amerasians and what has been done is more easy to review. It is arguable, for example, whether ODP should have been grasped at as a last resort for getting the children to their fathers' country. Officials probably won't admit it, but politics and economics have had a great deal to do with putting Amerasians who seek to leave Vietnam before those ODP examiners. Developments over the last decade — the steady arrival of nearly a million Indochinese refugees; the sudden Mariel boatlift from Cuba; and problems surrounding illegal aliens in general — have created an exaggerated unease among lawmakers, one intensified by a penurious national mood. Consider how Congress grudgingly crafted P.L. 97-359. It placed full financial responsibility for resettled Amerasians squarely on the shoulders of sponsors. In fact, it has been said that the only reason that legislation passed in the first place is because it was designed to cost the federal government virtually nothing.

The U.S. is apparently happy to admit its sons and daughters very slowly. "The system seems to be working reasonably well," a State Department source said just prior to the Vietnamese suspension. At times, U.S. officials have issued vague warnings about the "disorderly movements" of children that could result from a summary departure plan, one which could undermine public support for refugees. This cautioning has been used to blunt calls for allowing more Amerasian arrivals under a federal humanitarian parole provision. Even the appropriateness of parole for Amerasians is downplayed: ". . . (it) may be used for refugees only when there are compelling circumstances . . .," a State Department spokesman told voluntary agencies three months after Secretary Shultz revealed the formal plan to funnel Amerasians through ODP.

Such naysaying has contributed to making Amerasian admissions a numbers game in which U.S. officials gauge arrivals to the existing ODP ceiling. It is also used to mute discussion about speeding matters along.

"They told me to keep things low key," another former ODP interviewer said, recalling a briefing he gave to federal officials upon returning from a year in Vietnam. "They told me not to toy around with the issue or bring it up."

Then there is the strange logic one State Department source offered. Asked why the Amerasians' circumstances aren't highlighted like some of the pre-conditions the U.S. sets for relations with Vietnam — a reckoning on POW's and MIA's, and Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia — he replied, "What good would it do to tie them to normalization? Vietnam isn't going to withdraw from Cambodia, so it's likely normalization won't be occurring soon."

The shattered dreams that some Amerasians and their family members have suffered during ODP interviewing are of course less public. The admissions criteria of "looks, stories, and documentation" have been applied inconsistently, and the children themselves have been prey at times to the prejudices of American consular officers. Meanwhile, the mothers of Amerasians have had it even harder. Lacking the right appearances, and plagued by ignorance and often poor records, these mothers have occasionally run into considerable processing tangles. Others have been the targets of State Department suspicion stemming from a reasonable concern that some people might be dishonestly describing themselves as caretakers of Amerasians in order to leave Vietnam. As a result, last year the State Department refused to consider the cases of non-blood relatives for a period of six months. Even if it is conceded that some false claims were filed, the move was excessive and inappropriate. Documents proving foster parentage are rare in Vietnam, whereas family presence is crucial for the children's adjustment to the U.S.

The U.S. later withdrew its prohibition on caretakers at the urging of voluntary agencies, but a restriction on adult siblings reportedly still applies, and has splintered families.

Today, the possibility for Amerasians to again leave Vietnam in substantial numbers is uncertain at best. Vietnamese and U.S. officials met in Bangkok early last month and discussed the ODP program without resolving matters; at last report, no further meetings were scheduled. Even if things were to return to their pre-January status, and even if diplomatic relations were to ensue between Vietnam and the U.S., it's

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already too late to wipe away the record of half-hearted treatment Amerasians have suffered for so long.

This is why the most haunting question that surrounds the issue is not: "When will processing resume?" or "When will relations begin?" but one that will remain long after the last Amerasian face has been scrutinized in Ho Chi Minh City. As one American has put it: "History is going to ask why we didn't take our children in all at once."

PROPHET OF RENEWAL OR RETRENCHMENT?

The force of Cardinal Lustiger

STEVEN ENGLUND

LAST SUMMER, the archbishop of Paris, Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, celebrated a Mass in the cathedral of Notre-Dame for the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of his see from the Nazis. The congregation included many of the most important leaders of French state and society. In a better world, this memorial service would have been unexceptional, but in the France of the Fourth or Fifth Republics, it was unheard of. The wartime archbishop of Paris, Suhard, had somewhat soiled the church's linen by his ambiguous relations with Vichy and Berlin. De Gaulle, on re-entering his capital, had not seen fit to associate the cardinal in the joyous "Magnificat" sung in Notre-Dame. Since that time, four men have steered Peter's barque in Paris; not one of them, until now, has dared to conduct such a ceremony.

It fell to an émigré Jew who'd lost his mother at Auschwitz, who'd converted at fourteen, and who was foreign to the traditions of French Catholicism to have "recovered the honor of the church of France." Lustiger did not stand alone at the altar; his "accomplice" (his word) was a priest of pristine lineage, a man who'd early joined the Resistance, and whose only error in life was to have angered Rome with theological views for which a later pope made him a cardinal: Henri de Lubac, S.J. Uncharacteristically punctilious on this occasion, Lustiger wrote out his sermon which included a set of excerpts drawn from Father de Lubac's clandestine wartime writings in *Témoignage Chrétien*.

As extraordinary as this assemblage was in the long, conflict-ridden history of church-state relations in France, it was already what one might be tempted to call old red hat. Eighteen months earlier, on his elevation to the cardinalate, Lustiger had held an official reception in his residence which every important politician, from Mitterrand on down, chose to attend. "Understand why I tell you these things," he says earnestly, "they do not reflect on me but on the church. They mark moments in the emergence of the church from its ghetto in this country. The *Eglise de France* has rediscovered not only its right to exist but to speak out. My successor and his successor won't have to hide anymore. The interminable church-state turmoil is over in France."

The episcopate of Jean-Marie Lustiger — its weaknesses and its strengths — may be epitomized in these events and words, but to really understand them, to give the man his due as well as to prepare the ground for a critique, you have to take a brief look at the state of affairs that preceded his astonishing appearance in French public life. Few post-industrial nations have more dismal statistics where religion is concerned. These days scarcely 10 percent of French Catholics attend Mass (versus 25 percent in 1965), and the figures are much lower among workers. In the late fifties, nine of ten Catholic infants were baptized; now fewer than two-thirds are. In 1963, 80 percent of Catholics were married in a church; now it's 61 percent and falling. Figures pertaining to clergy are more depressing. There were 41,000 priests in France in 1965; today there are 28,630, and one priest in three is over sixty-five years of age. In 1984, only 111 men were ordained to the priesthood. At this rate there will be dioceses without priests by the turn of the century. No serious-minded person simply blames this state of affairs on the tradition of "Catholic Action" or the present French episcopacy. But for some years now, there has been a feeling that a new approach and new blood are badly needed.

In this enterprise no one else has played the role Lustiger has, but his leadership derives only in lesser part from his position as archbishop. In a nation so uniquely oriented to the capital as the French are, the metropolitan of Paris unquestionably holds the most watched job in the French church. In the eyes of government and the media, he is probably regarded as the *de facto* spokesperson for Catholicism in France. And of course he is a principal candidate for the presidency of the

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Episcopal Conference — at least till now. The man here counts for more than the times or the office in explaining change.

Lustiger is an extremely complex man. One is tempted to say that his most singular trait is his singularity — his differentness from any known model in the French church. This otherness is frequently a source of anguish to the cardinal, but so far, it has served him well in imposing his will on his diocese, his fellow bishops, and the huge outlying "sea" where Lustiger does so much of his "fishing."

The mainspring of the cardinal's singularity is his Jewishness — a term that does not apply merely to his ethnic origins or his former religion as, say, Anglicanism did for Newman or Manning. The "convert syndrome" doesn't go far in explaining Lustiger. The fount of the man's faith and life is Judaism. *He really is a Jewish cardinal.* In a spellbinding interview by two Israeli journalists in 1982, Lustiger spoke about his past and his faith. He did so shyly and reluctantly, but he felt he could not escape candor in these matters. The issue of his Jewishness had been endlessly raised in the media, the church, and not least, among Jews in Europe and even the U.S. Indeed, Lustiger had already raised the hackles of the chief rabbis of France and Israel with his informal remarks about considering himself still to be a Jew. Since this interview, he has never again touched on such things. One understands why:

> For me as a child [in Germany and France in the late thirties and the war] Judaism was a historical condition of being persecuted — a condition I didn't for one instant wish to escape, but which found its fulfillment or significance for me only in recognizing and receiving the figure of Jesus, Messiah of Israel. Judaism for me [as the child of entirely secularized parents] had no other religious content than what I discovered in Christianity. . . . What is a Jew [religiously speaking] . . . but the bearer of the chosenness of another [*un homme porteur d'une élection pour autrui*]? And for that reason he is rejected and killed. . . . How would you wish me to cease being a Jew, even if I wished to, which I do not? . . . It does not fall to man to decide what he is to be, but first to God. . . . I have never ceased being a Jew. . . . My profound hope is that Christians do not forget that they are grafted onto the unique root that is Israel. And that root abides.

The cardinal understandably regarded this as something of a go-for-broke credo. What is remarkable is that he won his gamble: he doused the fire in oil, as it were. Before the man's profound conviction and reasoning, and especially before his unswerving respect for Judaism, the chief rabbis backed off. They of course don't share Lustiger's views, but they quietly respect the man who holds them. Furthermore, the Jewish community was not the only audience which the cardinal intended to address with these words. As intensely personal as they are in one sense, the viewpoints stated on Judaism and its relationship to Chrisianity pack great meaning, an entire theology. At the very least they explain, in part, Lustiger's conception of his own mission, which I shall get to in a moment.

LUSTIGER'S origins and religious viewpoint are only the beginning (if the most important) of the ways in which he differs from his fellow French bishops. His formation and career depart rather sharply from the traditional routes. For example, he took a degree in letters from the Sorbonne (most French bishops go directly to seminary); he did not do graduate work in Rome, nor serve in papal diplomacy, nor ever work in the formation of priests (e.g., as a seminary professor or dean). After ordination (in 1954) he served for fifteen years as chaplain at the University of Paris. He associated his work at the Sorbonne closely with the French branch of the Pax Romana, a relatively ultramontane (or Roman) organization, rather than the Catholic Action's JEC (Catholic Student Movement).

The students and workers of the 1968 *évènements* found in Lustiger considerably less of an uncritical fellow traveler than they found in much of the Paris clergy. It is not that Fr. Lustiger disapproved of the students' actions — nobody in the Paris church publicly did that; it's that he refrained from "running with the hounds." And he rejected out of hand the "exploded Christianity" thesis of radicals like Michel de Certeau, the Jesuit philosopher, and Jean-Marie Domenach, the former editor of *Esprit*.

Lustiger's next assignment was a parish in the well-heeled sixteenth arrondissement, Ste. Jeanne de Chantal. As at the Sorbonne, so here, he got on extremely well with his flock, but there was never any doubt about who was in charge (the pastor) and what was the focus of parish life (the liturgy). The emphasis at Ste. Jeanne was on personal conversion and prayer, reflected in a kind of piety that the Germans call *gefühl* (sentimental). The pastor's concerns and his *modus operandi* kept him apart from the rest of the Paris clergy. He was known as a loner in those years, though he occasionally came to the public's attention as a highly skilled commentator on Catholic radio for the pope's visits to France.

Nothing communicates the strength and appeal of Lustiger as pastor better than a collection of homilies he published shortly before leaving Ste. Jeanne in 1978: *Sermons d'un curé de Paris* (Fayard). The meditations are emotional, intense, highly spiritual reflections on the Sabbath Scriptures, obviously intended to be only one part of a larger eucharistic liturgy. Though they say little about the major issues of the day, the sermons by no means lack insight into the human condition or the difficulties and challenges of faith; all were extemporized "from the heart."

This remarkable gift for public address, and personal magnetism, brought Lustiger to the attention of the apostolic delegate to France, Msgr. Bertoli, who recommended him to Rome for the prestigious see of Orléans which fell unexpectedly vacant in 1979. The appointment came as a surprise to everyone, beginning with Lustiger himself. Nothing of the new bishop's eighteen months at Orléans is as revelatory of his intended role in the French church as the sheer contrast between him and his predecessor. Guy-Marie Riobé epitomized in exaggeration the style and outlook of the French episcopacy in the last years of Paul VI. Though traditional in his background, Riobé late in life met Dom Helder Camara and experi-

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enced a kind of rebirth into social Christianity. He became an outspoken pacifist and critic of all forms of authority, including clerical. Always strongly progressive in social and political questions (like most bishops in France), he increasingly broke ranks with his colleagues on matters of sexuality, morality, and church affairs. As he became older, Msgr. Riobé turned more and more to mysticism and solitude, with the result that the diocese of Orléans had to run itself. But Riobé was sensitive and loving and it was a source of pain to him to be the *bête noire* among bishops. He died a marginalized and anguished man.

It is impossible not to see Lustiger's appointment as a virtual disavowal of the preceding stewardship — the more so as the new bishop said nothing of Riobé in his early speeches, and thereafter mentioned him only very rarely. Lustiger, if asked, readily grants that his opinion of Riobé's leadership is almost entirely critical.

If the Orléans appointment was a surprise, the translation to Paris left everyone (including Lustiger) stunned. Two other men were approached before Lustiger. Pope John Paul II did not yet know him well. One, Don Gramont, Benedictine Abbot of Bec, simply didn't want the job — in part because there is so little tradition in the French church of giving major episcopal appointments to religious. The other candidate, Albert Decourtnay, Bishop of Dijon, declined for reasons of health. He later recovered and was immediately appointed to the second most important position in the French hierarchy: the archdiocese of Lyon. But the point to notice here is the contrast between the new archbishop and the old.

François Marty is certainly a more astute and sly man than the peasant *curé de village* he adores to portray himself as, but he was not a strong leader of the sprawling Paris archdiocese (since reduced in size by the creation of suburban dioceses). Nor was he an eloquent and focused spokesman for the French church, a position he was expected to hold by virtue of being twice elected president of the Episcopal Conference (1969-1975). Marty was a classic illustration of the French pastoral bishop of the seventies. He was collegial and nondirective; he tended his flock, kept his mouth shut (only rarely making "social" or "political statements"), and tried to be uncontroversial. He succeeded, but in doing so gave little direction to the church of France. The declining fortunes of that church keenly wounded Marty and his colleagues, but few of them, and certainly not Marty, had any new ideas.

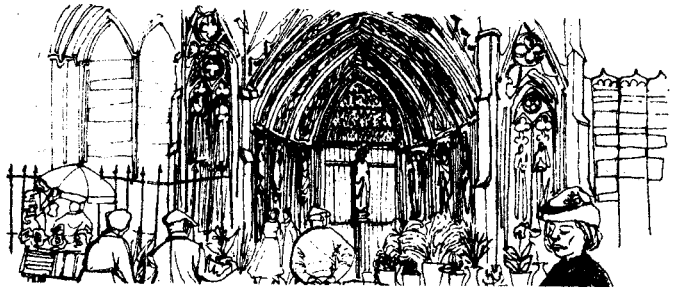
IT SHOULD be clear by now that it would be unwise, and almost impossible, to try to draw neat distinctions between what Lustiger refers to as *ma stratégie* and the man himself. Not only are they of a piece, but the man — his force of will, his differentness, his faith and personality — is as much responsible as his actions for what has happened in the archdiocese and beyond since 1981. Aaron Lustiger (he added Jean-Marie at his baptism and no longer uses Aaron although he has not dropped it) would not flinch if you described him as servant or shepherd or pastor, but such traditional notions fall vaguely off-center. *Qua* bishop — that is to say, as guardian of orthodoxy, father of his priests, protector of the flock — he is less of a "natural" than as the herald and prophet that his personal brand of Judeo-Christianity calls him to be.

As archbishop, Lustiger sees his first task as "spiritual conversion, not reform," a phrase that becomes clearer when he describes the second: "the deliberate reconciliation of French public opinion with Catholicism, *not vice versa*." The cardinal is repudiating what he sees as a fundamental tenet of the French era of "Catholic Action" — the effort to adapt itself to French society, eliminating distinctly Catholic practices that were viewed as barriers to successfully "missionizing" an anti-religious working class and a secular culture. Lustiger, by contrast, reaches back for inspiration to the early twentieth century, to the French "Catholic Renaissance" associated with famous converts or "born-agains" like Claudel, Bloy, Péguy, and the young Maritain. Lustiger has read them, one is forced to say, "religiously" and deeply resonates to their fervent, interiorized Catholicism, to their neo- (or rediscovered) orthodoxy that sought to bend the profane world to the sacred, not embark upon the "hope-less quest of trying to suit eternal revelation to the passing illusions and idols of society's fancy." For though he admires the courage of the Catholic Action pioneers, it is "a way that led straight to the ghetto," he says, "when it did not abandon the faith altogether. It hid from proclaiming the Gospel."

The cardinal hasn't the slightest interest in the problems and conflicts of church, society, and state that underly French Catholicism. "Pardon me my audacity," he says, "but as a Jew, I can talk like no other Catholic in France. I want to put these stale debates and clashes behind us. I am interested in the church of France reasserting its ancient right to be a major force and voice in the nation." He hopes to reawaken "the latent Catholicism in the hearts of the great body of Frenchmen" and to do this by preaching the Gospel from "every pulpit I can climb into."

The cardinal's third goal (note the order; the church itself comes last) is "to create a resurgence in spiritual fervor in the bosom of the practicing church" — something like charismatic renewal.

True to character, Lustiger has been impatient in pursuing these goals when he has not been ruthless. On entering office, he instantly sacked his predecessor's right-hand man. He let others go into retirement or occupy offices where they were not heard from again. And though he appointed one bishop to replace them, Lustiger hasn't shown much taste for episcopal assistance. He likes doing things himself. Word went out to the 900-odd priests of the archdiocese that the parish, not ad hoc



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A collection of Cardinal Lustiger's homilies, addresses, and interviews, *Dare to Believe* ($16.95, 260 pp.), will be published by Crossroad Books in July, and a second book, *Dare to Live*, dealing with social and moral issues, will follow next year.

Catholic Action groups, would be the central unit of church life, and that the liturgy would be the center of parish life. The cardinal set the example: each week finds him celebrating the (packed) 6:30 Mass at Notre-Dame. You have to search way back in the annals of the archdiocese to find a predecessor who did that. Lustiger created new parishes and revived old ones even when numbers of priests or faithful hardly seemed to justify it. His gamble has somewhat paid off: there has been a modest upsurge in Mass attendance and in the number of men entering seminary.

Lustiger also lost no time in taking in hand the formation of priests. He founded his own pre-seminary (La Maison St. Augustin) where his hand-selected novices are trained by hand-selected teachers, all under the close scrutiny of Lustiger who knows each man personally. After a year here, some seminarians are judged able to withstand the adulterated preparation at the local seminaries, but others are packed off to places like Louvain where Lustiger has greater faith in the priestly formation available.

The cardinal is no less interested in the training of laity and deacons for parish work. Within a few years, scores and scores of permanent deacons will emerge. Laity, too, may enroll in a special two-year course that Lustiger has established for them and graduate into important roles in church life at the grassroots. The formation given these men and women is intensely spiritual and traditional; they do not, for example, learn counseling or T-group techniques nor even read much orthodox (let alone liberation) theology. They study Scripture and discuss it; and they pray — *a lot*.

THE FOREGOING is only the briefest account of Lustiger's work within the archdiocese, where he has had the effect of a dither along a dormant electrical line. Pastors and assistants got shifted around the diocese like so many chess pieces. Some who were too deeply implicated with the sixties' and seventies' pastoral style and viewpoint got demoted and/or ignored. The priests' senate lost all significance and, in the words of one of its members, became a "commiseration club" for its sixty-odd representatives. Key members of the news team at Radio Notre-Dame, the popular church radio station in Paris, got sacked because they obstinately upheld "the old spirit" in the teeth of the new archbishop. It's a sign of the times that one of the frequent news commentators at Radio Notre-Dame is now a religion editor from the conservative *Le Figaro*, replacing a correspondent from the left-wing *Le Monde*. Lustiger has never been especially pleased with *Le Monde*'s coverage of church matters. He called one of its reporters a "shit-raker" (*fouille-merde*).

Those church-related institutions beyond the cardinal's reach also came in for their share of trouble. One of Lustiger's most serious *faux pas* concerns the Catholic press, which in France, unlike the U.S., is large, diverse, independent, and often profitable. A part of the problem is that many ex-priests work for one or another of these newspapers, magazines, or reviews, and they constitute perhaps the only breed of *homo sapiens* toward whom Jean-Marie Lustiger is irremediably antagonistic. A majority of Catholic publications, including the important mass circulation magazine *La Vie*, is anchored in the *Action Catholique* mentality. (For most of its long life, *La Vie* was called *La Vie Catholique*, but in an effort to "adapt," it dropped the adjective. This is not the sort of action to arouse the cardinal's respect.) Fundamentally, Lustiger doesn't understand what the Catholic press is about. He doubts their good faith and imagines they are principally motivated by the desire to turn a profit. From time to time the cardinal will still hector an editor for a particular article, but as it has become gradually clearer that he isn't going to "convert" these men and women — many of them just as tough as he — he has turned his back on them. He is far more available for interviews by the secular French and foreign press than he is by reporters of the independent Catholic publications. His staff privately deplores this, and Lustiger himself is sheepish when confronted with it. He half admits he's made a mistake, but says defiantly, with a wave of the hand, "Well I won't be a prisoner of that little inbred world!"

In the same mood, Cardinal Lustiger is quite liable to tell you that administering the archdiocese of Paris holds no appeal to him. His greatest interest and energy is reserved for the world beyond the perimeter of the archdiocese. Here he has created for himself a unique position in the church of France; he is rapidly becoming a media star. There are other eloquent bishops in the country, but to read the papers or listen to radio or watch television, you'd think there was only Lustiger. In the words of the head of Christian Media, the bishops' PR-office, this archbishop is the church's *phare* (lighthouse, beacon, headlights) in France.

Nevertheless, he isn't your garden variety "great communicator." Both in print and on the tube Lustiger doesn't come across as seamless and sleek; rather, he seems intense, convoluted, and intellectual, easily inclined to moodiness. Though he may also be warm and very funny, what is compelling in Lustiger is his force of will. When you watch him on TV or giving a homily, phrases like "a mighty fortress" or "tower of strength" stream through your head. There's been debate in France (as elsewhere) over the dangers of "media-charisma." But if the concern is that the masses are being hoodwinked by a lightweight with a gift of gab and no follow-through, then Lustiger isn't disquieting. He won't let people go till he's answered all their questions and done his damndest to bring them round to his viewpoint.

Lustiger's qualities and his inescapable position as *l'outsider complet* (the complete outsider) stand him in excellent stead with the media, Rome, and the French government. Lustiger's close relations with the pope have been exaggerated, but it is not fanciful to imagine that the two "outsiders" — the Pole in Rome and the Polish-German Jew in Paris —

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share a condition that engenders trust. Lustiger travels to Rome far more often than French business requires, and the pope has periodically conferred on him assignments that bespeak confidence. Finally, John Paul II categorically endorses Lustiger's policies in the church of France.

The other "outsider" in a high place with whom the cardinal has developed a personal relationship is François Mitterrand, whom Lustiger sees or talks to on the telephone on a purely private basis. It isn't necessary to strain the cortex to see what befriends a socialist-atheist and a prophet-archbishop both of whom admire (and possess) forcefulness and intelligence, and in whose mutual interest it is to maintain harmony between church and state. Their separate peace functioned usefully at the time of the great *école libre* set-to of 1983-84. The Mauroy government, motivated by hoary anticlericalist campaign promises, moved to nationalize all private (mostly Catholic) schools. The proposed Savary Law unexpectedly set off the largest popular protest in France since 1968; the government was obliged to back off. Throughout the crisis, Lustiger and Mitterrand remained in contact, which may have facilitated the swiftness with which the President of the Republic abandoned his prime minister and education minister, and bowed to *force majeure*.

Good with popes, presidents, and parishioners, Lustiger has a much harder time with priests and fellow bishops. In part, of course, certain fellow clerics are jealous of his visibility, just as some resent him for not being a "member of the club." In fairness to these critics, Lustiger can be vulgar, abrasive, obstinate, and temperamental. His early participation in the annual assemblies of the French bishops at Lourdes were marked by brooding reserve followed by blunt, explosive interventions. He is not a team player. At the time of the *école libre* debate, he broke ranks in a most public fashion. The bishops — mostly men of the Marty and Riobé ilk — were paralyzed by ambivalence, for the grass-roots groundswell was loudly championed (if in no sense caused) by right-wing political parties. The Episcopal Conference reluctantly accepted a leadership role and initiated negotiations with Mauroy and Savary. Lustiger, however, was frustrated and disgusted by what he saw as the excessive hesitancy and caution of his colleagues. Eventually he broke step at one or two critical moments and blasted the prime minister, whom he publicly accused of "breaking his word." (It isn't clear whether Mauroy did or didn't break his word; but if a bishop had equivocated in the same way Mauroy did, he would have been flayed alive by the government and the press for conduct unbecoming a clergyman.)

Nor did Cardinal Lustiger bask in episcopal approval when he invited the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to give several lectures and speeches in Paris. Cardinal Ratzinger used the opportunity to condemn the French bishops for, among other things, their failure to develop a unified national catechism in place of the rather open-ended and thematic volume, *Pierres Vivantes (Living Stones)*, judged inappropriate by Rome for the indoctrination of the young. Lustiger's sympathies lie with Ratzinger.

THE CONFLICT between the archbishop of Paris and most French bishops stood out at the recent synod. Lustiger was assigned by the pope to an important committee to draft the closing address to the world. Dominating the group, Lustiger wrote the draft that was submitted to the plenary session. It is vintage Lustiger, at once eloquent and pessimistic, an almost unbearable threnody of the "catastrophes," "the tragedies and crimes," and "hungers and hatreds" of our age, imploring God to "look at the darkness in which our hopes and our projects are engulfed," yet beseeching him to explain his absence. The message turns to hope, but it is the Resurrection, the aftermath of the self-destruction of civilization; it is the hope that God and his love abide when the world has passed away.

The draft incited fourteen interventions by bishops, only four of them positive, and the others running from mild criticisms to excoriations, along the lines of finding the message "dour," "pessimistic," and "Manichean." "I tried to write in the language of the Gospel," Lustiger explained later. "I tried so hard to avoid merely ecclesiastical issues and debates, but they didn't hear me."

A problem underlying all such skirmishes is that "Monseigneur Outsider Complet," "Monseigneur Self-Made Man," "Monseigneur le Bulldozer d'Archevêque" (to list a few of the epithets I collected from critics) is the battering ram of Rome's attack on six decades of French Catholicism. In political terms, he and John Paul stand for the reassertion of a highly spiritualized brand of conservative, ultramontane neo-orthodoxy. And in the French episcopacy (where the median age is over sixty) and secular clergy (where it's not much below), there is only a minority who have moved far enough away from the Catholicism of their youth to readily sympathize with the cardinal's approach.

Yet Lustiger and his critics share a mutual commitment to what they all see as the mystical body of Christ in the world: the church. Lustiger's energy and strategy have been painful for many, but very, very few think him fundamentally destructive. An unquestionable excitement and spiritual renewal are afoot in Paris, and almost no one denies that this archbishop plays the leading role. Let us talk more closely to some of his fiercest critics.

Father Alain De la Morandais is a middle-aged intellectual who was beside himself when the cardinal sacked him from the news team at Radio Notre-Dame. He had a stormy interview with his bishop in which he was told that he was "a rather worldly priest" with "too many connections in society" who needed "to 'thin down' a bit." With that, De la Morandais found himself assigned to a run-down, sparsely-attended parish in an outlying *quartier* of an outlying arrondissement. As the priest soon discovered, Plaisance was an area of Paris where Catholic Action had violently pitted the working class against "the independents" (the bourgeoisie), while proving, in the long run, unable to "missionize" either group. "It's a classic story," he says, "repeated all over Paris." It was very difficult for De la Morandais to adapt to parish work at Notre-Dame du Travail; till now, he'd spent most of his

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priestly life either in academe or in journalism. But he sensed the cardinal was right in his prescription for him, and he set to work. In two years both the priest and his parish have grown considerably.

Does De la Morandais now share his bishop's spirituality and theology, or approve of all his policies in the archdiocese? No. He does feel, however, that the spiritual renewal at Notre-Dame du Travail reflects a phenomenon occurring around the capital. As a historian he knows that "the times" play a crucial role in such phenomena, but he grants that Lustiger has been "indispensable." This cardinal is in many regards, "the most important thing that's happened to the church in France in my lifetime."

I have lingered with this priest not because his story is exceptional, but because it is exemplary of a score of others I gathered. Father Xavier de Chalendar is an older, highly respected priest in the archdiocese — a member of the priests' senate and the head of Le Centre Pastorale at St. Merri Church near the Paris city hall. De Chalendar is too senior to be pushed around (he was Lustiger's boss for a while in the late sixties), but the pastoral center he runs is not a parish and enjoys zero priority with Lustiger. De Chalendar reads Teilhard and finds his inspiration in the Incarnation and the Resurrection; his bishop "reads von Balthasar and finds his themes in the cross and suffering." De Chalendar knows he and the cardinal will never agree about most issues pertaining to church governance or sexual morality. Nevertheless, he trusts the cardinal's commitment to the church, and believes that the cardinal trusts his.

Few have felt the lash of the angry Lustiger more squarely than José de Broucker, the lay editor-in-chief of *La Vie* (née *Catholique*), yet amidst the flood of chapter-and-verse criticism he can cite, he too agrees that this archbishop "is one of the most remarkable men of our time" and that the church in Paris "is probably changing for the better." No man in secular journalism ranks higher on Lustiger's S-List (the cardinal is capable of using such expressions) than Henri Fesquet, now the retired religion editor of *Le Monde*, and undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable journalists in France about the church. Fesquet can, and does, excoriate Lustiger on given actions, but remains "cautiously optimistic" about his episcopate, in part because "the older approaches are maybe running out of steam," and because Lustiger himself "possesses rare qualities."

The list could be drawn out with the names of more journalists, priests, professors, and bishops. Few will blankly endorse the cardinal's policies and style, but almost none would agree with a Jesuit who told me that Lustiger represents "an archaic falling back on nineteenth-century formulas, a failure to come to grips with modernity." The great majority admire this man for his "rare qualities" and believe that his overall impact on the church is beneficial, although they are emotionally sympathetic to traditions and outlooks foreign to Lustiger. There is a sense in which people feel compelled to acknowledge a prophet's authority while no Frenchman would bend his knee to a mere cardinal. Talking with the cleric-chief of Christian Media, I was told, "Sometimes when Monseigneur Lustiger speaks, people sense there's someone behind him." "The pope?" I answered knowingly (*vox episcopus vox pontifex* is a commonplace in Paris these days). "No, for heaven's sake, what do you take us for?" he replied in mild disgust, "I mean God."

The sympathetic foreign observer has his own critique of Lustiger and the current spiritual renewal in Paris. The political dimensions of the spiritual renewal, for example, are worrisome despite Cardinal Lustiger's insistence that he stands *au-dessus de la mêlée*. De Gaulle said the same thing, and we know it meant, in effect, he was conservative. A brief journey through a thick file of newspaper clips will show the reader that Lustiger's episcopate has coincided with a "return" of many Catholic voters to right-wing political affiliations after a one- or two-year sojourn on the Mitterrandist left. But in this, Catholics are no different from a large group of centrist voters disillusioned (for one reason or another) with the Socialists' performance since 1981. Lustiger himself is acutely aware of what he calls "the conservative admixture" in most "historical religious renewals"; he is, rather more assiduous in keeping his distance from the political right than from Mitterrand. In social and economic matters, in policy toward the third world, and on the current question of the

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immigrants in French society, Lustiger (like nearly all French bishops) stands closer to the political left than to the right. Certainly the far right — the *Lepenistes* (followers of Le Pen) and the *intégristes* (followers of Lefebvre) — are incomparably more critical of "the Jew," as one reactionary speaker called Lustiger, than are the Communists or the Socialists. Nevertheless, Lustiger has more than once failed to keep in mind the political context, or assumed he could "transcend" it, and has appeared publicly as the ally of right-wing parties with whom, in truth, he has nothing in common. It is telling that one of Lustiger's key supporters — the philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, co-founder of the French edition of *Communio* — looked forward to the right's return to power, not because he or Lustiger supports the right, but so that the church in Paris might demonstrate its distance from a conservative government.

NEVERTHELESS, the chief worry to my mind isn't politics without, but rather within, the church and the faith. There is a distinctly airless quality about the theology that the harbingers of the French spiritual renewal rely upon, as well as a certain contempt for mundane historical reality. No one in the archdiocese seems to be familiar with the kind of serious criticism that Peter Berger, for instance, makes of Christian neo-orthodoxy in his remarkable *The Heretical Imperative*. "The neo-orthodox imagination" confronts "the 'Word of God' in an empirically inaccessible realm. But concrete human beings do not exist in such a realm." In theory, "the denial of reality is always a bad place to begin."

Berger's words are more relevant to the philosophers and theologians around *Communio* than to Lustiger himself, whose mind is actually far from closed to new ideas in theology though no longer much concerned with the "intellectual doubt" of his student days.

But Cardinal Lustiger's closest call has come within the church of France. I doubt that he is as aware as many of his allies are that in his early years as archbishop he very nearly permanently divided his diocese and indeed the entire French church. In the words of René Rémond, the distinguished French historian and strong Lustiger supporter, "His actions and reactions are intuitive, but they can be dead wrong. He has been very lucky so far."

Indeed the cardinal has been "lucky," but luck isn't all or most of the explanation of his success. Nor is it even the strength of his personality, for strength alone, as Paul Tillich noted in one of his finest sermons, is dangerous: "Strength without love destroys, first others, then itself." Lustiger is a strong man for whom, in Tillich's further words, "Love . . . is an element of strength." Neither the cardinal nor his adversaries have permitted the classic antinomies — Gallican/ultramontane, progressive/conservative — to divide them definitively. If, to paraphrase Péguy, the *mystique* hasn't once again degenerated into *politique*, it is because both sides are in the last analysis guided by their love of the church and their respect for each other. For the moment, Paris is an exciting spiritual place to be.

Stage

ALL IN THE FAMILY

'PRECIOUS SONS'

GEORGE FURTH'S *Precious Sons* is an old-fashioned play, suggesting the period in which it is set. A realistic play with a clearly discernible plot, it takes place in Chicago in 1949 and, in four scenes spread across three days, it tells the story of the brief hope and discarded dreams of a working-class father who passes up his chance for promotion and watches his sons go off to destinations other than the ones he set for them. The force working for and against the three of them is the wife and mother, a determined, manipulative, sometimes hysterical woman who knows what she wants and gets it. The characters, particularly the parents, Fred and Bea, are somewhat raunchier than their counterparts would have been in the late 1940s, but otherwise Furth's attention to period detail and midwestern idiom gives his play the verisimilitude expected in the heyday of that genre. Unlike the characters in the backward-looking *Biloxi Blues*, those of Furth — except perhaps for the son who, like Chicago-born Furth, goes off to be an actor — seem the product of observation rather than theatrical stereotype. The playwright and the performers create a sense of family out of and beyond the constant bickering.

There are two plays at war within Furth's script: the tougher one finally falls victim to a sense of popular drama that has marked most of Furth's work. My very weak recollection of *Twigs* (1971) is that it consisted of conventional sketches valuable only as a chance for Sada Thompson to show her ingenuity as a performer (and perhaps to indicate that she would eventually be ready for the high-toned *schmaltz* of television's *Family*). A similar soapiness predominated in the book Furth did for Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970). Furth's Broadway touches in *Precious Sons* come in the first-act and final curtains. At the end of the first act, Fred and Bea have a wild and presumably characteristic fight in which Bea not only smashes dishes and rips her clothes, but turns over a heavy china cupboard. Up to this point, Bea appears as a comically querulous nag, catering to her husband and sons even as she abuses them. Suddenly, she seems genuinely demented, as crazy as Fred keeps saying she is. In the second act, once again in control, she reveals that she has either acceded to or maneuvered the decisions by which the sons avoid the father's desire that they get the education he thinks they need to do better than he has done with his life. One, fresh out of high school, gets married, thus assuring that he will go on the assembly line, not to college; the other goes into the road company of *A Streetcar Named Desire* rather than to the difficult but desirable Lab School at the University of Chicago.

Fred, on the surface at least, is a cocky man, playfully

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insulting his wife, rough-housing with his older son, teasing his unresponsive younger one. He is also prone to ulcers and uncertainty, and to sudden indications of the love he has for all of them, offered in embarrassment and usually rejected. At the end of the play, he turns down the advancement that would take him away from Chicago, blesses his actor son, and makes a tiny gesture of defiance by leaving open a door on the untidiness that his wife wants to screen from the guests who have begun to arrive to celebrate the marriage of which he disapproves. This is a modified happy ending to a play that does not need it. It suggests that what *Precious Sons* is about is a strong woman's holding her family together against the wishes and without the knowledge of her insufficient husband. If that is the play at hand, then why the first-act histrionics, except as a high-note on which to bring down the curtain?

What the play really seems to be and to avoid being is the sardonic story of a woman who saves her home, her security, by cutting loose her two sons (perhaps by sending them where they want to go) and destroying her husband in the process. Not only does she refuse to leave Chicago, but she convinces Fred of his inability to do the job offered him even though his immediate boss and the head of the company think that, even without a college education, he can handle the more demanding position. His dependence on her at the end of the play suggests Doc's reliance on Lola at the conclusion of William Inge's *Come Back, Little Sheba*. The play would be more honest with its material if it conveyed something of the horror of Strindberg's *The Father*.

My doubts about *Precious Sons* as a play do not extend to Judith Ivey and Ed Harris as Bea and Fred. A pre-opening interview with Ivey indicated that her character was being softened somewhat so that she would not come across as a complete monster. Ivey indicates Bea's areas of vulnerability, but there is never any doubt outside the fight scene that she controls what is going on in that house. Ivey's impressive performance in an unattractive role is more than matched by Ed Harris's Fred. The sense of pain and loss in the character, Fred, is conveyed less by his lines than by the abrupt changes in the way Harris carries himself, his macho strut giving way to a sag of weariness, his mocking tough-guy mask splashed suddenly with hurt. In the scene in which his son announces his run-away marriage, Fred goes silent; the anger and defeat in Harris's walk as he moves around the room and out the door says more than any exposition could about Fred's own youthful marriage and what it has become and about his disappointment in and for the son who does not, and cannot understand yet what he has done.

To be fair to Furth, the final, small upbeat gestures may not be the playwright's attempt to tidy the situation for a likable curtain, but the character's way of papering over their despair. After all, Bea's victory must be almost as empty for her as it is for us. The real victory in *Precious Sons* belongs neither to Bea nor to the playwright but to Ed Harris, who has created a wonderfully complex wounded creature out of the materials that Furth has given him.

GERALD WEALES

Books: WITH A TUTORED EYE

IMAGE AS INSIGHT
VISUAL UNDERSTANDING IN WESTERN CHRISTIANITY AND SECULAR CULTURE
Margaret R. Miles
Beacon Press, $24.95, 200 pp.

Nell Gifford-Martin

IMAGE AS INSIGHT is a work of exploration. Professor Miles's territory is the space where reading and seeing might meet. She seeks a "historical hermeneutic" — a method of historical study that could encompass both visual and verbal sources without reducing one to the other.

Professor Miles's own field is Western Christian history of doctrine, and her accomplishments in that field are already considerable. *Augustine on the Body* was published in 1979 in the American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series, followed in 1981 by *Fullness of Life: Historical Foundations for a New Asceticism (Westminster)*. She is, according to the publisher's press release, "the first tenured woman professor in the three-hundred-year history of the Harvard Divinity School."

Professor Miles notes that the relation between texts and images is not given or static and, further, that one must evaluate the variable relations between "message given" and "message received." Precisely because artifacts are mute, their messages are multivalent. The historian who chooses to spread her net more broadly than texts must proceed aware of the elusiveness of her object and the strong possibility of projecting a desired outcome upon materials of the past. The only tools, according to the author, are a skilled eye, an active and sympathetic imagination, and long practice.

With those qualifications in mind, Ms. Miles chooses to demonstrate the possibility of a visual/verbal interpretation within three areas in which her own exposure is strongest: church architecture and its decoration in Constantinian Rome; early fourteenth-century Tuscan representations of women; and the conflict over visual expressions in the sixteenth century. Her demonstrations are preceded by a methodological chapter, and followed by application to the twentieth century.

The opening methodological section may try to do too much. Bits of Foucault, Sassure-via-Barthes, Victor and Edith Turner, Clifford Geertz, Gadamer (all the "usual suspects") surface in text and notes; one has the feeling at times of having stepped into a tennis stroke on the wrong foot. Because historical method *and* hermeneutics are simultaneously up for revision, as preface to a programmatic analysis of non-verbal texts, the form

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of the book's argument sometimes becomes diffused in the process of defining all its parts.

Further, good women could differ in the choice and use of some visual monuments. I would wonder, for example, whether Constantinian Roman church architecture and decoration, saddled as it was with Constantine's dual program of Christianizing the civil government and revalorizing the cult of the emperor, was sufficiently representative of fourth-century Christian visual expressions to bear the weight of the generalizations here drawn from it. More broadly, late antique art, Christian and otherwise, had a history (rather, histories) of its own that might substantially modify the interpretations offered here.

Image As Insight bears richer fruits in the chapters on the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The former chapter focuses on common representations of the Virgin Mary and Mary of Magdala. Here Professor Miles demonstrates how one mode of representation could address and serve radically different, even opposing, needs: on the one hand, effectively taming and containing the Other (a spiritually superior, threatening female); on the other hand, for *others*, offering a model and sign of hope: ". . . the plays, paintings, and popular devotions that deal with the life of the Virgin reveal a woman who was able to experience the events of girlhood, young womanhood, motherhood, old age, and death without being overwhelmed by their physical aspects. Through all biological changes she pursued a life of spiritual intensity and personal power. That this spiritual autonomy was even possible, medieval women would have known from no other source."

Professor Miles's treatment of the sixteenth century is a striking and rewarding exercise. It was a time in which two quite difficult approaches were made to the balance between images and words. The sedulous iconoclasm that accompanied the nationalization of parts of the Catholic church has not been studied in the West with anything like the thoroughness applied to Byzantine iconoclasm of the eighth and ninth centuries; conversely, sixteenth century "Catholic" art is usually studied quite apart from contemporary ecclesiastical history, as stylistic development: the emergence of the Baroque. In an inventive, suggestive move, Professor Miles pairs the two — "Protestant" iconoclasm and "Catholic" Baroque art — as opposite faces of one phenomenon: perceptual reform.

The "reformers" of both parties recognized the influence of visual images: one party chose to destroy them, the other to maximize them. In that sense, the stripping of churches, burning of crucifixes, whitewashing of frescoes, nationalization of treasures, defilement of tombs, all were cultic acts intended to revalorize that which can be learned by the senses. As examples, Miles focuses on three buildings: the high Baroque *Chiesa del Gesú* in Rome (1584), centerpiece of Jesuit church architecture; Luther's Schloss Chapel in Torgau, Germany (1534), and Zwingli's Grossmünster, Zurich, a Carolingian foundation drastically simplified during the sixteenth century. Each demonstrates a sort of spatial rhetoric: the *Gesú* plays a hierarchical organization of space off against a dazzlingly mobile visual display to emphasize the dynamic relations of heaven and earth. The Grossmünster represents the most common solution of the time in "reformed" areas: retaining the formal structure of the building, but rendering its space unintelligible by removing such organizing marks as altars. Finally, most interesting, Luther's Chapel deconstructs visual speech. The focal wall broken into planes, interrupted by vaults, destabilized. This is a hall for hearing.

Image As Insight concludes with an address to the twentieth century. Today we are awash in visual images skillfully crafted to fashion our sensibilities and actions as consumers and as citizens. Miles urges a greater sensitivity to the often subliminal manipulation of our appetites by powerful suggestions.

> . . . [S]ince Christian churches have relinquished the task of providing life-orienting images, values, and attitudes, secular culture has seized the opportunity of filling the void. In the absence of religious images, secular images function as life-orienting; they do provide messages from which people form self-images, values, and attitudes. These images, however, are not presented to place human life in its broadest and deepest context but to perpetuate a consumer culture. Images become idolatrous when they function as life-orienting but serve the private commercial gain of a few individuals. . . . Churches, in abdicating responsibility for the training of vision, have failed to provide both life-orienting images and training in their critical appreciation.

She counsels "training oneself to choose and use images" critically, for the sake of spiritual and psychological development.

In her final chapter Professor Miles touches briefly upon what is, I suspect, the heart of the problem for Western historians: the failure ever to establish a stable and lasting resolution of the contradiction, articulated and considerably extended by Plato, between the enormously attractive power of Beauty and the inconstancy of the senses. Our first official censor, Plato succeeded in convincing some that "custody of the eyes" was a necessary prior condition to the pursuit of truth; at the same time he acknowledged the somatic origin of knowledge (Miles cites *Symposium* 210a-212b). Plato also, of course, gave us one of the most beautiful hymns to the love of Beauty (*Phaedrus* 249b-250b), "the fourth and last kind of madness." In this book, no more than in Plato, is the tension resolved.

As you may have gathered from the quotations, *Image As Insight* appears to have in mind an audience: theologically concerned; sophisticated; literate; perhaps less than fully appreciative of non-verbal dimensions of life in general; presumably unappreciative of the cognitive possibilities and expressive characteristics of objects, as opposed to texts. It may be precisely at this point, of audience, that I find the book least successful. For example, the introduction and opening chapter, which are devoted to method, rely upon an acquaintance with authors such as Foucault, Geertz,

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Wittgenstein — exactly the kind of people one could scarcely read without becoming disabused of the very notions Professor Miles is out to combat. It's a tangle: just enough theory-and-method to point (a Wittgenstein term of art); not enough to elucidate for the critical newcomer a rigorous visual epistemology.

The knotty prior questions remain: what is the character of the knowledge we gain through our eyes? How does it come about? How can it be evaluated? Is it "local knowledge," or universal, across space and time? How can it be shared or passed on? What is a visual tradition?

Secondly: visual tradition. It has yet to be demonstrated that the history of formal developments (which issue in objects) is synchronous with the history of ideas, not to mention with the vagaries of governments or with the complex syntheses of cultures and religions. The archaeological method of Foucault assumes synchronicity to a sufficient degree that one can take a vertical "slice" of a culture at a moment in time, analyze it, come up with something to say. Rather it may be — and I suspect is — true that formal developments have a history of their own. If that is the case, then the relation between the history of objects and the history of thought will have to be measured with a finer gauge.

The book does not effectively address the methodological problem of safeguarding against projection upon mute objects of the past. Refined sensibilities and a good eye are simply not enough to produce more than intuition. We need intuition, certainly; then we need a fuller model to flesh out the intuitions that arise from our contacts with the past. We need more studies like Geertz's own "Art as a Cultural System" that would examine the relative and variable "meanings" of purely formal elements such as shape and line within specific cultures and times. And we need — if we are to work across disciplines as this book attempts to do — either to acquire fully the skills of each discipline we will engage, or to practice a deeper level of cooperation with one another so that we can avoid errors of fact and perspective that detract from our intentions.

Finally, the book is cluttered with too many agendas. At least three purposes are maintained here simultaneously: (1) to right the balance between visual and textual sources in the history of thought; (2) to find a way into the past as experienced by those who did not leave written records, particularly women; and (3) to propose a therapeutic ascetic remedy for our present condition of visual saturation and manipulation. Each effort would profit from treatment on its own terms.

Siren's wail

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Margaret Atwood

Houghton Mifflin, $16.95, 311 pp.

Tom O'Brien

I LIKE Margaret Atwood very much, but her new novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, less. It's an ambitious recasting of *1984*, from a woman's point of view, positing a takeover of the United States by right-wing religious fanatics who establish a monotheocracy. Atwood sets this in the near future, time enough, she imagines, for a crisis in fertility caused by AIDS, new strains of syphilis, and poisoning by environmental and toxic hazards. As a result, the male oligarchy that runs Gilead turns all available women (divorcees, anyone married to a divorced man, or women who have lived with men) into second wives, handmaids, as long as they have "viable ovaries." A police state enforces this polygamy and general policy with ruthless terror.

It's not exactly the outlandishness of this that bothers me. As Atwood notes, most of the things she depicts here have their parallel in contemporary events: in the attack on women's rights by some Protestant evangelicals and Islamic fanatics, and in the practice of government terror that she is all too familiar with as a member of Amnesty International.

Atwood even includes small topical

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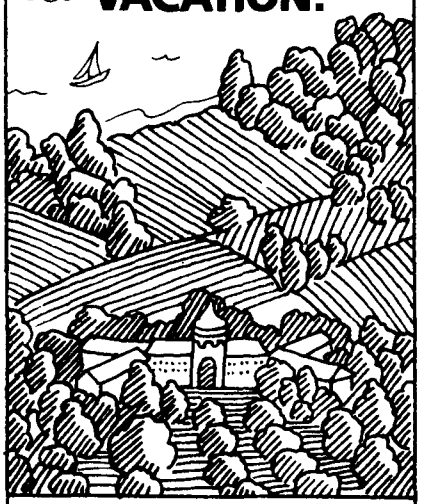

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terms like "salvagings" — the Philippine expression for state-sponsored murder — to describe Gilead's executions, and "re-education centers" — from the Cambodian and Vietnam takeovers — where "handmaids" are taught to accept the benefits of their new lot. In a historical note at the end of the book (notes from a literary conference after the fall of Gilead) one professor points out that Gilead "invented nothing." In Atwood's view, it represents a "synthesis" or "extrapolation" of current trends, which, if unchecked, could make Gilead happen here. At this level, as dire warning, *The Handmaid's Tale* is valuable.

It is also well executed. Atwood, who began as a poet, has always been able to infuse the sense of the spoken voice into her novels, a power which makes the fantastic acceptable; at all times you feel as if you're in the presence of a real person. Her narrator is "Offred," a handmaid whose name suggests possession by one of the male commanders of Gilead (one "Fred") and also provides an Anglo-Saxon, early medieval echo. Offred remembers what life was like before the takeover, and recalls fondly her friendship with a boyfriend and their child. Alternating between lyrical memory and a laconic repressed tone, Atwood makes us feel keenly Offred's conflict and suffering.

As in all Atwood novels, humor aids survival. At times the comedy emerges only in thin strokes of mordant wit as Offred scans her drab options. But as the plot thickens, Atwood stages a few uproarious incongruities. The commander informs Offred that he wants to see her privately, something forbidden except for prescribed loveless mating sessions. She wonders what he intends, imagining something even more gothic than her imprisoned status. But all he wants is to play Scrabble, a game charged with eroticism since his wife won't talk to him and all women are forbidden to read. Soon, he starts passing Offred old copies of Vogue (what Atwood calls the "subversive literature of the future") and taking her out to a secret club. In effect, he not only likes her, but even gets up the courage to ask for a date. As Offred comments, "it was too banal to be true."

Nevertheless, these pleasures of *The Handmaid's Tale* are offset by weaknesses. Although one accepts Atwood's point about the flexibility of history, and although there is the whiff of religious war around today, it is hard to take her distopia too seriously. She imagines that Gilead occupies most of the United States, with various regions rebelling or simply encircled (the major cities). But the portrait of the national situation is skimpy, the international almost nonexistent. Moreover, there is little reference to industry. I don't mean technology: as in all futuristic fantasy, *The Handmaid's Tale* is filled with gadgets, especially computers (one franchise in Gilead is a street corner operation called Soul Scrolls, which provides computerized printout prayers). But Atwood skips on most business, thereby making her fantasy that much more fantastic.

This is not only Atwood's defect. It is a problem with most writers in the utopian genre who are never strong on the culture of production — probably because so few writers have real experience with what it means to shape production, design, and market commodities. Of course, business culture can include coercion, and of course it has been complicit in so many right-wing authoritarian dictatorships around the world. But it also includes vast numbers of people in this country whom it would be difficult to tame into cooperative roles in any planned economy. The texture of that culture, which surrounds us in most major urban centers in the United States, is entirely missing in *The Handmaid's Tale*. It is perhaps no accident that Atwood's main location is Cambridge, Massachusetts, a one-industry town.

The Handmaid's Tale marks another attempt by Atwood to expand her range. She has been eager, in her last works, to escape some of the restrictions on the realistic novel (usually concerned with the problems of young women) that she mastered so well in *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Lady Oracle* (1972) and *Surfacing* (1976) — although in the last a quasi-stream of consciousness at the

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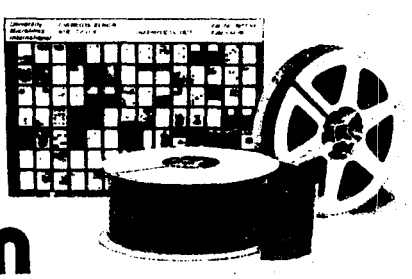

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close modified the realism considerably. In *Life Before Man* (1980), Atwood experimented even more: the novel has three narrators, one a man, and begins with a suicide, moving the focus away from realistic character study to more explosive action. In *Bodily Harm* (1983), Atwood went further, positioning her heroine, a journalist on vacation, in the middle of a Caribbean coup d'état. *The Handmaid's Tale* fulfills this pattern of development and feeds on Atwood's strong political interests. The idea of writing a political novel and fusing rich character presentation and real action is compelling — almost a Promethean defiance of conventional vapid definitions of high art. But for me, *The Handmaid's Tale* just doesn't match Atwood's ambition.

Atwood is above all a moralist, albeit of a novel kind. Atwood hates villainy, to be sure, and vividly protests it. But she is also concerned about self-victimization, about the denial of self that she feels makes good people easy prey for bad. Toward the end of *Surfacing*, her heroine realizes that she has too long accepted bullying from others, most often in the subtle form of inculcations to humility and passivity. "This above all," she resolves about her future life, "to refuse to be a victim." Such wisdom is difficult to put into practice. It doesn't, for example, neatly square with a tone in traditional moral teaching, particularly Christian. But I remember reading the line and being stunned by its aptness. By a sad process of psychological elision we often equate, or are encouraged to equate, goodness and niceness. But self-depreciating, or self-destructive niceness is immoral. It demeans a part of God's creation that we must respect — if not, how can we honestly respect anything else? The choices are not victimization or villainy, Atwood suggests; goodness and strength might be near allies.

Delineating that wisdom has been Atwood's life work. *The Handmaid's Tale* is a nightmarish exclusion of its possibility. Perhaps that is what most makes me uncomfortable. Or perhaps Atwood has not yet found the way to apply such wisdom beyond interpersonal relations and on the broader stage of politics.

This immense journey

TO BE A REVOLUTIONARY
Padre J. Guadalupe Carney
Harper & Row, 473 pp.

J.A. Appleyard

THIS IS a remarkable book, not least because of the circumstances in which it came into existence. Carney, an American priest and for most of his life a Jesuit, tells us that he wrote it by candlelight, during bouts of insomnia and vigils of prayer, in a shack outside a remote Nicaraguan village where he spent the last two years of his life as a political exile from his beloved Honduras. Yet the book is an immensely detailed and even documented account of his life, and especially of the twenty-plus years he worked in Central America. It is certainly the work of a man who did not know fatigue: he wrote it in *four* versions, one for campesinos, another for more literate readers, and both in English and in Spanish!

Even the idea of the book is itself a paradox. No intellectual or writer, a Jesuit who disliked and even resented his studies, a pragmatic organizer of banana-workers' cooperatives, Carney wanted nothing more than to live the life of the poorest Honduran peasant out of love for Christ. Yet at what he correctly guesses will probably be the end of his life, before he crosses back into Honduras as a guerrilla, he engages in the most self-conscious of twentieth-century expressive forms, autobiography, and produces not simply a memoir to be xeroxed and passed around among family members and friends, but a full-scale book, an *apologia*, a message to North Americans whose culture he says he hates, about how bourgeois Christianity has failed and why only the overthrow, violent if necessary, of their capitalist system will make possible the true kingdom Christ preached. What a provocative image for contemporary Americans to come to terms with!

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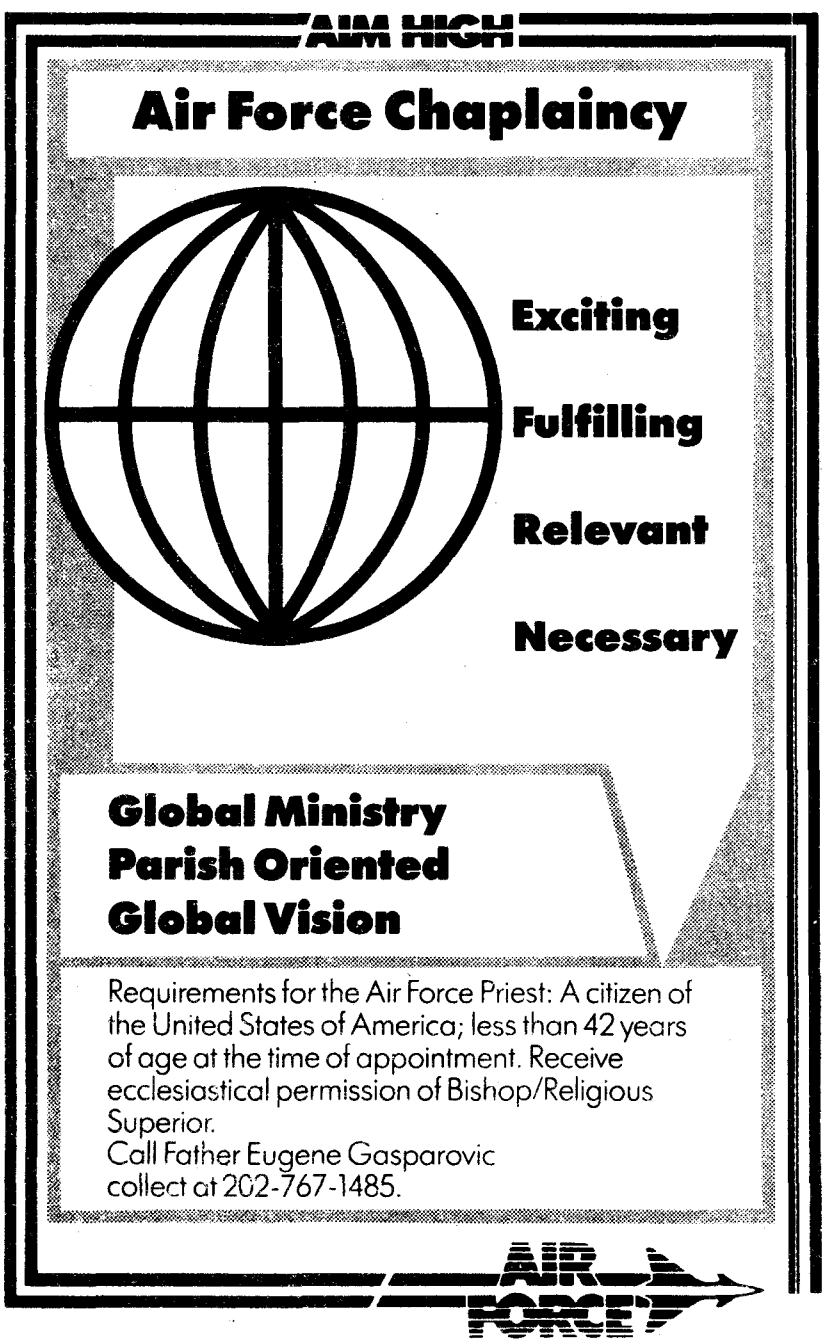
The theme is the transformation of a middle-class American boy into a revolutionary. It is a journey in roughly three stages. The first deals with young Jim Carney's sense of identity and religious vocation. He grew up in various midwestern cities as the family moved, started St. Louis University just as World War II began, served in the Army in Europe, went back to school after his discharge, and entered the long years of traditional Jesuit training in 1948. Looking back, he finds himself somewhat of a rebel even then (refusing officers' training, befriending German war prisoners against orders, getting into trouble with religious superiors because he was more interested in the juvenile courts and the St. Louis slums than in his philosophical studies), but with no real political understanding of the institutional structures he was reacting against. Three years of high-school teaching as a scholastic in Belize confirmed his love for the poor and his desire to work in Central America, but even after he arrived in Honduras as a priest in 1962 (renamed "Guadalupe" as a symbol of his commitment) he still considered himself very much a conventional, middle-class, anti-Communist "gringo."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The second stage of the journey is the years of the "metamorphosis" of his political consciousness. In the farming towns of the fertile Sula valley, he asks himself why the campesinos are so poor (they don't own the land they farm), who owns the land (a few Honduran families, multinational corporations), who profits from their work (mainly U.S. investors), and how peasants can be organized. Henceforth, his work goes along two paths: developing small "basic Christian communities," with lay leaders, in the rural villages; and working with ANACH, one of the national agrarian-reform movements, to establish cooperatives among the campesinos. This difficult, controversial, frustrating work goes on for years. It is one work, not two, as Carney gradually comes to see; he says that perhaps the thing he did best was give the Spiritual Exercises to the campesino leaders. But it is a version of the Exercises we might not all recognize, where the call of Christ becomes an appeal to transform an unjust capitalist society into his kingdom by means of a liberating revolution.

The turning point to the third stage comes when Carney realizes that reform is an illusory ideal, and that nothing less than revolution will do. Even the successful cooperatives end up being co-opted by the capitalist system: the campesinos are content to work their own small plots of land, and nothing happens to change the larger unjust structures of ownership and production which control their lives. From now on Carney begins to distinguish the truly "liberating" faith communities from those which focus only on the religious experience of their members and therefore in a political sense "alienate" them from full human experience. The Bible's good news about liberation needs the Marxist-Leninist analysis of social reality to make it efficacious. He is by now a controversial figure in the eyes of church and government; though he has become a Honduran citizen, in 1979 he is arrested and put on a

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plane to Miami, permanently exiled.

The following year he returns, to a small village in Nicaragua, where the Sandinista revolution has brought about much of what Carney had dreamed of for Honduras. Restless because there is no injustice to fight, he asks his Jesuit superiors for permission to return to Honduras with a guerrilla band. When he is refused, he formally leaves the Society "for a time." This is where the book ends, with the words: "To be a Christian is to be a revolutionary." His family tells us in an epilogue that in July 1983 he crossed into Honduras with a small group of guerrillas. Within two months he appears to have been captured or killed in fighting by U.S.-assisted Honduran troops (his chalice and other possessions were recovered). His family could obtain no satisfactory account of his imprisonment or death.

Carney's step-by-step account of how his understanding of the campesinos's situation changed will help readers picture some of the realities behind the headlines and rhetoric of current discussion about Central America. But, more importantly, like any good story of a life, his book demands that we think about our own lives: this was his journey, what does it say about mine? Carney is not an eloquent writer, but he tells his story with some detachment and in enough detail so that readers can judge for themselves how far they would follow him through the stages of his "metamorphosis" as a revolutionary. In the end what the reader will remember may not be the final version of Carney's political and theological message so much as the example of his life. The voice that tells this story is passionate, uncompromising, full of love and anger, the voice of a man struggling to be faithful while incapable of being satisfied by anything less than commitments which are total.

In his sleepless hours of prayer he wrestled with the basic question of how a Christian lives in this world: what kind of reality ought "the kingdom of God" to have? Carney's answer is that it cannot be realized only in the hearts of men and women; it has to become real in the structures of society, too, and he will not be satisfied with anything less than the whole thing, realized here and now, in Honduras. A Marxist revolution is a very plausible response to this kind of theology; it matches one apocalyptic vision with another. Most Christians down through history have tried to realize the kingdom of God in less radical ways. This book is testimony about a life lived out of the conviction that most Christians are wrong. The commitment of the writer is a challenge, but the debate will go on.

REVIEWERS

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 226)

forget to spell out is the *mode* of that transformation; this is what Ranly is beginning to do for us. So I now see why I am never disappointed in what he writes.

DAVID BURRELL, C.S.C.

Reconciliation in Peru

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: I was moved by the profound insight of Fr. Ranly's assessment of the real need in the Peruvian situation ["Under the Peruvian Volcano," February 14] for the church to be a reconciling presence, a process that begins in Christ: "In other words, the first need is not military nor social nor political: it is mystical."

Pelagianism is not dead; we are always trying to achieve salvation, our own or someone else's, on our own. If the real need is a reconciling presence, and if this is the right role for the church as Fr. Ranly says it is, then there is a primary necessity for oneness in the person of Christ, the kind of union with him and with each other that comes through prayer and sacrament. Jesus himself once said that this kind of demonic possession which nowadays seems to afflict so much of our world can be overcome only by prayer.

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